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Thesis for the Cand.Polit degree in Political Science

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# **The Troubles in Northern Ireland.**

## **A Civil War in the United Kingdom – against all odds?**

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### ***List of Abbreviations***

AIA	Anglo-Irish Agreement
CA	Catholic Association
CDU	Campaign for Democracy in Ulster
CSJ	Campaign for Social Justice
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIA	Government of Ireland Act
GNP	Gross National Product
HCL	Homeless Citizens' League
HGA	Home Government Association
IPP	Irish Parliamentary Party
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
MP	Member of Parliament
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Right Association
NILP	Northern Ireland Labour Party
OIRA	Official Irish Republican Army
PD	People's Democracy
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PR (STV)	Proportional Representation Single Transferable Vote
PUP	Protestant Unionist Party
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SDLP	Social Democratic and Labour Party
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UCDC	Ulster Constitutional Defence Committee
UDA	Ulster Defence Association
UK	United Kingdom
USC	Ulster Special Constabulary

UUC	Ulster Unionist Council
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party
UPV	Ulster Protestant Volunteers
UVF	Ulster Unionist Force

## Map of United Kingdom<sup>1</sup>



## Map of Northern Ireland<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Map of United Kingdom: <http://www.mapblaster.com/myblast/index.mb>

<sup>2</sup> Map of Northern Ireland: <http://www.nidex.com/map.htm>

# 1. Introduction

The Troubles that broke out in the late 1960s had roots going back many decades. Northern Ireland<sup>3</sup> has never been like a place at peace with itself (McKittrick and McVea 2000). What is at the bottom of this crisis Northern Ireland has experienced?

Descendants of Gaelic tribes who conquered the island in the centuries B.C. make up the majority of the Irish population (Lydersen 1994) and the seventeenth-century plantation of the northern province of Ulster is the root of which was to become the problem of Northern Ireland (Hennessey 1997). The land that was colonized by English and Scottish Protestants<sup>4</sup> were previously held by what Hennessey (1997:1) refers to as “Catholic ‘Old English’” and Irish natives. The English colonizing of Ulster was met with plenty of resist. To secure political control thousands of settlers with loyalty to the British Queen were moved in. In the same period, the Gaelic population was deprived of landed property and the ability to hold power. A range of battles in this period contributed to a culture where violence was accepted as political means. Political dividing lines in Ireland used to be plain: before the plantation of Ulster, the whole population had been Roman Catholics. The settlers were Protestants (Lydersen 1994). In the following centuries, the differences between Protestants and Catholics remained explicit, and new political philosophies crystallized among Ulster’s inhabitants. By the late nineteenth century, there was the following new divide: between Nationalists, who wanted self-government for Ireland and Unionists, who wished Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.<sup>5</sup> This division occurred along religious lines too: Nationalists and Catholics

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<sup>3</sup> In this study, I have chosen to do as Richard Rose does in his book “Northern Ireland. A Time of Choice” (1976:3, footnote 1): “Northern Ireland, Ulster, and the Province are used interchangeably to refer to the six counties of Ireland under British sovereignty. The usage is adopted for the sake of simplicity, without political intent. Technically, no term suits exactly: for example, the northernmost part of the island lies in Donegal, a county of “southern” Ireland.”

“Northern Ireland is not an independent sovereign state. Both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland constitutionally claim the right to govern it. The UK is the *de facto* sovereign, and the inhabitants of Northern Ireland themselves disagree on whether they should be ruled by the UK or the Republic, but they do not aspire to independent status” (Lijphart 1975:84).

<sup>4</sup> I chose to use the concepts Catholic(s) and Nationalist (s) interchangeably and Protestant(s) and Unionist(s) interchangeably. Hennessey says, “Although not all Protestants are unionists and not all Catholics are nationalists, it is a commonly held perception, even in Northern Ireland, that religious belief corresponds to political allegiance” (‘A Note on Terminology,’ in “A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996,” 1997).

<sup>5</sup> In 1801, Ireland was absorbed into the United Kingdom (Hennessey 1997:1).

on one side and Unionists and Protestants on the other side. By 1911, out of a population of 1,581,969 in Ulster, there were 890,880 Protestants, in the three other provinces there were only 256,699 Protestants scattered among 2,551,854 Catholics (Hennessey 1997).

A succession of movements attempted to overthrow the union during the nineteenth century. Some of the movements, as the Repeal Movement in the 1840s and the Home Rule Movement from the 1870s were parliamentary, but there were also movements dedicated to overthrow the union by using physical force, like the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). The union would probably been repealed by a Home Rule Act if it had not been for the intervention of the First World War. During the war an armed rising was attempted in Dublin the Easter week of 1916. But the rising failed and the leaders were executed. This created a wave of sympathy for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and its political wing, Sinn Féin. Sinn Féin effectively replaced the old Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) and established its own Irish parliament in the 1918 election. A treaty and the Government of Ireland Act (GIA) ended the resulting war of Independence between Britain and the IRA in 1920 (Dunn 1995). The treaty resulted in a twenty-six-county Irish Free State<sup>6</sup> (McKittrick and McVea 2000) and a Northern Ireland belonging to the United Kingdom (UK). Many Ulster Protestants had become increasingly concerned about the possible establishment of home rule for Ireland since the 1880s, and they prepared for resistance. A civil war seemed about to happen in 1912, but the focus was shifted from Ulster by the start of the First World War and from 1918, Ulster Protestants increasingly settled for a move back position and set out to ensure that the northern counties of Ireland, at least, should be excluded from any Home Rule arrangements. Their position was recognized and confirmed through GIA by partitioning the island (Dunn 1995).

Northern Ireland was born in violence (McKittrick and McVea 2000). There were occasional IRA raids from across the new border as well as major outbreaks of sectarian violence, especially in Belfast from the first months. Despite the Protestants majority, the creation of Northern Ireland did not bring security to them because it was clear that London was never as committed to the Union as the Protestants were. They constantly feared that British policy might move to support a

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<sup>6</sup> The Irish Free State and its government came officially into being on 6 December 1922. In 1948 the general election resulted in a legislation passed which declared the state to be the Republic of Ireland (Fitzsimmons 1993:46 and 62).



united Ireland. On the whole, they lived in a state of political nervousness. The Protestants were also deeply suspicious of the half-million Catholics inside the boundaries of the new Northern Ireland because “those Catholics considered themselves trapped in this new state, denied their Irish identity, cut off from their co-religionists in the Free State and politically powerless” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:4).

The Catholics added another complaint too: they were discriminated against the Protestants in the allocation of housing and jobs, political rights and other areas. The Catholics claimed that the Unionist establishment actively discriminated Catholics and the boundaries of Northern Ireland that came into being in 1921 were essentially worked out between Westminster and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP). In the beginning of the era of Northern Ireland, both Catholics and Protestant were unsure whether the new state would survive. Some Nationalists assumed it would prove unworkable because they believed the state was too small to form the basis of a feasible state. Others thought the Boundary Commission would end its existence by reducing its size even more. But when the Commission’s report emerged in 1925, it resulted in no changes to the border. The Catholic civil rights movement that took the streets in 1968 did it with complaints related directly to the arrangements of the 1920s (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

### **1.1. *The Problem***

This thesis will analyze the causes of the Troubles in Northern Ireland in the end of the 1960s. The period from 1969-1994 has been named the Troubles after all the violence in the period. What can possibly explain the outbreak of what most of all reminded of a civil war in the United Kingdom? This is in sharp contrast with most of the theories of armed conflict. This paper will be about the beginning of the period (1969-1972), and the main problem of my thesis is whether the partition of Ireland in the 1920s can explain the outbreak of the Troubles?

## **1.2. Method**

### **1.2.1. Why Northern Ireland is a Special Case Study**

This thesis is a case study of Northern Ireland, and in more than one way does Northern Ireland represent a deviant case. The UK's policies in Northern Ireland have been quite different than the policies in other regions, colonies and other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. As an area of conflict, Northern Ireland is deviant in western European connection. This is true for both duration and the amount of violence (Lydersen 1994).

Goldstein (1994:138) asserts "wars do not have a single and simple cause" and he maintains that conflict among states is not an unusual condition but an ordinary one. He defines conflict as "a difference in preferred outcomes in a bargaining situation" (Goldstein 1994:137). Smith (2000:1) defines armed conflicts as "open, armed clashes between two or more centrally organized parties, with continuity between clashes, in disputes about power over government and territory.

Smith (2000) says that a very general conclusion to what are the most common causes of armed conflicts could be poor economic conditions. These conditions are the most long-term causes of intra-state armed conflicts today. Poverty is one of the most obvious and the most easily identifiable among the cluster of social facts that are repeatedly found in the background to conflict (Smith 1997a).<sup>7</sup> Hauge and Ellingsen (1998) also argue that economic conditions emerge as the most important explanatory factors and that a low level of economic development is the key issue. When Ellingsen (2000) tests her hypothesis about socio-economic development her hypothesis is supported. She expects domestic conflict to be more frequent in countries with low socio-economic development than in countries with high socio-economic development. Auvinen (1997:188) concludes, "Poor economic performance, a low level of economic development, and middle levels of political authoritarianism are conducive to mass political conflict." Muller and

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<sup>7</sup> It is difficult to define poverty. Definitions can be misleading, and when using maps and GNP you do not get the regional, gender and class variations. It is also important to note that the connection between poverty and conflict are complex. Poverty is not synonymous to conflict (Smith 1997a).

Weede (1990:624) also support this: “High rates of economic growth reduce the incidence of political violence.”

Another important cause of armed conflict is type of political system. Most theories on the relationship between democracy and political violence relay on that a democracy is less likely to experience political violence and conflict (Ellingsen 2000). Riggs (1994:14 cited in Ellingsen 2000:236) argues, “Because democracies use methods like cooperation and autonomy to handle ethnic conflict, they also are less likely to experience violence.” Democracies accept different types of political participation like protests, strikes, demonstrations, but at the same time democracies grant their citizens civil and political rights and they make discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion, language or politics less likely (Ellingsen 2000). Gurr (1994) also argues that autocracies are more likely to experience conflicts. This is because discrimination in autocratic regimes provokes violence. Ellingsen’s hypothesis (2000:237) that “domestic conflict is less likely in democracies than in autocracies or semi democracies and that domestic conflict is less likely in autocracies than in semi democracies” is supported when she tests her variables. Her findings support the argument by Muller and Weede (1990) that “democratic regimes have other ways of resolving conflicts and autocracies suppress violent opposition, whereas in-between regimes are more prone to domestic conflict” (cited in Ellingsen 2000:243) This is also supported by Hegre et al. (2000:1): “Theoretical and empirical work indicates that established democracies and harshly authoritarian states have few civil wars and that semi-democracies are the most conflict prone.” Smith (2000) says that a repressive political system is war prone, especially in periods of transitions. In the end, degradation of renewable resources contributes significantly to the likelihood of violent conflict. Smith mentions soil erosion, deforestation and water scarcity as important renewable resources. Dessler (1994:101) argues, “Environmental change is an ubiquitous cause of violent conflict.” But these resources are in general not as central to the problem as political and economic determinants are (Smith 2000).

Because the most theories on civil wars assert that such wars most often happen in poor, undemocratic or transitional countries (see chapter 2), Northern Ireland is a special case.

### **1.2.2. Northern Ireland: A Case Study**

This paper is a case study of Northern Ireland. Robert K. Yin (1989:23) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.” Case studies differ from other types of social studies inquiries in, among other things, the units of analysis and the possibility to control the context the case study is covering. The comparative and quantitative (statistical) method covers more than one unit of analysis, a case study covers usually only one. That is why case studies can be labeled intensive research: it makes it possible for the researcher to inquire more aspects of one unit. Concerning the possibility to control the context: In an experiment, the context is “controlled” by the laboratory environment, which is impossible when doing case studies (Yin 1989).

Arend Lijphart (1971:691) distinguishes between six types of case studies: atheoretical, interpretative, hypothesis-generating, theory-confirming, theory-infirming, and deviant case studies. Any particular study of a single case may fit more than one of the categories, because these categories are ideal types (Lijphart 1971). My case study fits to theory-infirming case studies. Concerning theory-confirming and theory-infirming case studies, Lijphart (1971:692) writes that they

“Are analyses of single cases within the framework of established generalizations.... The case study is a test of the proposition, which may turn out to be confirmed or infirmed by it. If the case study is of the theory-confirming type, it strengthens the proposition in question. But, assuming that proposition is solidly based on a large number of cases, the demonstration that one more case fits does not strengthen it a great deal. Likewise, theory-infirming case studies merely weaken the generalizations marginally.”

According to Yin (1989) there are three reasons to choose to do single case studies. The first is critical case, which tests a well-formulated theory. Such case study is critical to existing theories, models, assumptions or practice. “The theory has specified a clear set of propositions as well as the circumstances within which the propositions are believed to be true” (Yin 1989:47). The

second reason is because the case is a unique or extreme one, in other words, that it gives a new combination of more or less known conditions, which have not been investigated accurately before. This says Yin (1989:47), “has commonly been the situation in clinical psychology, where a specific injury or disorder may be so rare that any single case is worth documenting and analyzing.” The third and last rationale for single-case study is the one Yin names revelatory case because this type of case reveals a particular phenomenon. This situation exists when “an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation” (Yin 1989:48). My case does not fit to the second or third reason, but better to the first reason. I am not writing about a unique or extreme case and not about a phenomenon that never been studied before. There are written a lot of books and articles that touch my problem: whether the partition of Ireland in the 1920s explains the outbreak of the Troubles? But these books often describe what happened in the 1920s and 1960s and seldom write anything about that the most theories about armed conflict assert that such a conflict should not break out in Northern Ireland. My case do not fit perfect to the first point either, I will not be critical to existing theories, but try to demonstrate that Northern Ireland is a deviant case if we look to the most common causes of armed conflict.

### **1.2.3. Case Studies: Limitations**

It can be a weakness of the case study method that it comprises only one single case and this is why a case study can “...constitute neither the basis for a valid generalization nor the ground for disproving an established generalization” (Lijphart 1971:691). Because science is a generalizing activity the scientific status of the case study is somewhat ambiguous (Lijphart 1971). I will not do generalizations, but use Northern Ireland as an example of a case that does not fit in to existing theories about armed conflict. But case studies can make an important contribution to the establishment of general propositions and thus to theory building in political science. One case study can throw light on information that can be used in other case studies, or also make up the basis for comparative and statistical investigations. Hypothesis-generating case studies, theory-confirming case studies, theory-infirming case studies and deviant case studies are examples of theory building case studies. These are as Lijphart (1971:693) points out, “...implicitly comparative analysis.”

Case studies also have a problem regarding validity. Kirk and Miller (1987:19) define validity as “...the extent to which a measurement procedure gives the correct answer.” Yin (1989:40) defines validity as “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied.” Validity describes the relevance of the data’s relation to the problem. A researcher tries to get as much validity as possible by providing that the operational definition of the variables covers the theoretical definition. To get a high degree of reliability, validity is needed (Hellevik 1991). Kirk and Miller (1987:21) assert, “To focus on the validity of an observation is to care about whether measurements have currency.” No experiment can be perfectly controlled, and to some degree say Kirk and Miller (1987), is all measurement suspect.

To which extent the operational definition is in harmony with the theoretical definition is difficult to establish because the theoretically defined characteristic often cannot be directly measured. Reliability is defined as “...the extent to which a measurement procedure yields the same answer however and whenever it is carried out (Kirk and Miller 1987:19). Yin (1989:41) defines reliability like this: “Demonstrating that the operations of a study – such as the data collection procedures – can be repeated, with the same results.” This is generally difficult in case studies because there is a close connection between the data collection and the interpretation of data. This increases the possibility that the data can be misinterpreted because the researcher may interpret the data in a way he wishes them to be. To avoid this; the researcher must be critical of his own favorite ideas (Andersen 1990).

#### **1.2.4. Data and Reliability**

The reliability of a case study can be affected by its data sources. As Yin (1989) points out, evidence for a case study may come from six types of sources: interviews, documents, archival records, direct observation(s), participant-observation(s), and physical artefacts. The case study can be based on one type of source only, but the best way is to use multiple sources of evidence because “...any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a corroboratory mode” (Yin 1989:97). How data are classified varies from author to author. I have chosen to use

Andersen's (1990: 140-141) classification. He distinguishes between primary and secondary data, stimulated and not stimulated data and quantitative and qualitative data. Primary data are data that the researcher himself has collected; data collected by other than the researcher are secondary data. If the researcher has stimulated the data on purpose during the data collection, the unit is as classified stimulated data, and if not, not stimulated data. The questions in an interview can be interpreted as stimulus and this stimulus leads the person interviewed to respond and the interviewer notices the answer. Quantitative data are formally and structured and can be used to make generalizations. Such data is statistic data. The qualitative data are not so formally and structured and it is more difficult to do generalizations with this type of data. The data in this paper will be secondary, not stimulated data, mostly of qualitative type. Secondary data are books, articles, speeches, and statements about Northern Ireland. It is written an amount of books and articles about Northern Ireland, and like other conflicts, much of the literature can be coloured by the authors' own opinions. Because of this, an article can rather be a personal contribution to the debate than an objective point of view. It will be difficult, almost impossible to find objective data. I have to accept the data for what it is: often a subjective opinion. By giving references, the readers can read the book, article, or speech and decide himself if this is more of a personal contribution to the debate than an objectively point of view. Possible quantitative data in this paper will be elections- and survey results.

I hope I will be able to show why Northern Ireland is a special case study. Northern Ireland is not a poor country, though it is the poorest region in the UK. Regarding Northern Ireland as an area of conflict, Northern Ireland is deviant compared to the rest of Western Europe. This is true for both time and the magnitude of violence (Lydersen 1994).

## 2. Causes of Armed Conflicts

The question of why nations differ in rates of domestic political violence is of fundamental interest because the continuation of political stability is an aim of all governments. High rates of political violence, which signify the existence of rebellion or civil war, make threats to the stability of any regime (Muller and Weede 1990). Many descriptive generalizations and propositions can be made about the origins, processes, and effects of political violence generally and of its several forms. Political violence is episodic and chronic in the history of most organized political communities. Institutions, persons, and policies of rulers have inspired to violent rage all the way through the history of organized political life (Gurr 1970). Conflicts between communal groups and states has come to be recognized as the major challenge to domestic and international security in most parts of the world since the end of the Cold War (Gurr 1994).

The world has experienced a clear increase in the amount of domestic armed conflict rather than interstate conflicts since the end of World War II. Up to the mid-1970s this, for the most part, reflected the growth of independent states in the international system, but from then on the number of conflicts increased faster than the number of emerging states (Gleditsch 1996). Most domestic armed conflicts for this period have taken place in developing countries (Hauge and Ellingsen 1998). Between 1961 and 1968 some form of violent civil conflict reportedly occurred in 114 of the world's 121 larger nations and colonies (Graham and Gurr 1969 cited in Gurr 1970:3). The number of domestic armed conflicts has declined to some extent after the end of the Cold War<sup>8</sup> (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1997). But still, domestic armed conflicts continue to be much more numerous than international armed conflicts (Gleditsch 1998). In fact, war in today's world is rarely international (Hegre et al. 2000). During the period 1989-2000 there were 111 armed conflicts in 74 different locations. Of the 111 conflicts, 33 were active in 27 different locations in 2000, compared with 37 conflicts in 28 locations in 1999. The number of armed conflicts in 2000 is the lowest recorded in the post-Cold War period (Wallensteen and Sollenberg

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<sup>8</sup> The Cold War lasted from 1945-1990 (Goldstein 1994:582).



2001). Since 1992 there has been on the whole, a decline in the number of conflicts per year (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 2000).

## **2.1. Armed Conflicts, Regime Types, and Different Parts of the World Defined**

The shape of armed conflicts today makes the task of classifying and counting them complex (Smith 1997a). A definition of an armed conflict is somewhat different from researcher to researcher. Singer and Small (1994 cited in Hegre et al. 2000:16) define civil war as an internal war where: “(a) military action was involved, (b) the national government at the time as actively involved, (c) effective resistance occurred on both sides (as measured by the ratio of fatalities of the weaker to the stronger forces), and (d) at least a 1,000 battle deaths resulted during the civil war.” Goldstein (1994:165) defines civil war as “...in which state military forces participate... generally on only one side,” and he asserts that civil wars often seem to be among the most brutal wars. Smith’s (1997a:118) definition of a war is a definition that consists of “open armed conflict, about power or territory, involving centrally organized fighters and fighting and with continuity between clashes.” He uses the concept war and armed conflict interchangeably because war is armed conflict. I chose to do the same. Some researchers limit the term “war” to the bigger armed conflicts, but Smith uses a low threshold of casualties; the lower limit is 25 war deaths in any one year, in a conflict in which total war deaths number at least several hundreds. The reason for this very low minimum figure he says is “the common pattern of wars in which the level of activity goes through a series of peaks and troughs” (Smith 1997a:118).<sup>9</sup>

Democracy,<sup>10</sup> say Jagers and Gurr (1995:469), “in its simplest conceptualization...defined by what it is not; democracy is the opposite of autocracy.” From this viewpoint, democratic and

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<sup>9</sup> McKittrick and McVea (2000:323) assert that 3651 people were killed in Northern Ireland from 1966 to 2000. There were continuity between clashes and there were organized fighters. I consider what happened in Northern Ireland to be a civil war.

<sup>10</sup> Democracy is a concept with several dimensions (Blackwell Dictionary of Political Science 1999:98). The word democracy derives from the Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratia* (rule or authority), hence “rule by the people” (Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Science 1991:166). The practical questions for politicians and political scientists have been “Who are the people?” and “How can a people rule?” A generally agreed conclusion from the twentieth century is that the people should all be sane, non-criminal adults (Blackwell Dictionary of Political Science 1999:98-99). The people’s decision, if they are to govern, can hardly be made by unanimous votes because that would result in no decision taken. Consequently, it is generally agreed that simple majority must settle questions.

autocratic systems are said to occupy two ends of a single political continuum. In between these two “ideal types,” political systems can be defined by their degree of democratic qualities. Jagers and Gurr (1995:471) define democracy by three essential, interdependent elements. The first is

“The presence of institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative political and policies and leaders. This is accomplished through the establishment of regular and meaningful competition among individual and organized groups, an inclusive degree of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, and a level of political liberties sufficient to ensure the integrity of democratic participation, procedures and institutions.”

The second component of democracy is “the existence of institutionalized constraints on exercise of executive power” and “the capacity of citizens to select political representatives” (ibid). The third element of democracy is “the guarantee of civil liberties to all citizens in their daily lives and in acts of political participation” (Diamond et al. 1988 cited in Jagers and Gurr 1995:471). In present-day political language, civil liberties are more or less synonymous with the notion of human rights (Jagers and Gurr 1995). Goldstein (1994:118) defines democracy as “ a government of the people, usually through elected representatives, and usually with a respect for individual rights in society (especially rights to hold political ideas differing from those of the government).”

Non-democratic governments are often called authoritarian governments (Goldstein 1994). Authoritarian regimes refer to very varied kinds of political systems “whose common properties are a lack of regulated political competition and lack of concern for political and civil liberties” (Jagers and Gurr 1995:471). Goldstein (1994:118) defines authoritarian regimes as “the government rules without the need to stand for free elections, to respect civil and political rights,

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The direct democracy, used in Athena, has largely given way to representative democracy (Blackwell Dictionary of Political Science 1999:98-99). Democracy as a descriptive term may be regarded as synonymous with majority rule. Majority appears to be clearer cut than “people”; it means “more than half.” In votes between two options or candidates this poses no difficulty; in votes between three or more it does. The plurality rule (“select the candidate with the largest simple number of votes, even if that number is less than half of the votes cast”) may select somebody whom the majority regards as the worst candidate. Nevertheless, countries using this rule for national elections (such as the UK, USA and India) are normally described as “democratic” (Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics

to allow freedom of the press, and so forth.” Jagers and Gurr (1995) use the more neutral term autocracy for these types of political systems, and so do I.

A distinction needs to be made between consolidated democracies and semi-democracies (Hegre et al. 2000). Barry R. Weingast (1997 cited from Hegre et al. 2000:5) refers to these democracies as unconsolidated democracies and he asserts about unconsolidated democracies: “...in unconsolidated democracies...universalistic limits on the state cannot be sustained...Violence and intimidation may be commonplace, and major political parties may advocate the overthrow of the government.” Consolidated democracies show self-enforcing rules and institutions that serve to tone down the circumstances that lead to organized civil violence (Hegre et al. 2000). But when is a country in transition between two different regime types? Ellingsen and Hauge (1998:308) characterize political stability as “if a country had the same type of regime for ten years or more...otherwise as unstable.” Mansfield and Snyder (1995:9) consider states to be democratizing “if during a given period of time, they change from autocracy to either anocracy or democracy, or if they change from anocracy to democracy. Conversely, states are autocratizing if they change from democracy to autocracy or anocracy, or from anocracy to autocracy.”

Countries in the South of the world are often called the “third world” (third after the West and the East). The South includes Latin America (including South America), Africa (below the Sahara desert), the Middle East (from Northern Africa through Turkey and Iran), and much of Asia (Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan). Moreover, countries in the South is also referred to as “developing” countries or “less developed” countries in contrast to the “developed” countries of the North. North includes both the “West” (the rich countries of Western Europe, North America, Canada, Japan, the Koreas, Australia, and New Zealand) and the old “East” (the former Soviet Union and its bloc of allies) (Goldstein 1994).<sup>11</sup>

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1996:129-130). LeDuc et al. (1996:4) assert “...elections are a central, if not *the* central, institution of democratic governance.

<sup>11</sup> Note that geographical designations like “the West” and “the Middle East” are European-centered. From Korea, for example, China and Russia are to the West and the United States are to the East (Goldstein 1994:15, footnote 9).

## **2.2. Theories About Armed Conflicts**

In the modern world, armed conflicts occur mostly in poor or undemocratic or transitional countries (Goldstein 1994). Theories about civil conflicts include among others regime type and level of economic development (Hauge 1997).

### **2.2.1. Regime Type and Armed Conflicts**

Studies of democracy and domestic conflict indicate that established democracies and strictly authoritarian states have few civil wars, and that semi-democracies are the most conflict prone (Ellingsen 1996; Muller and Weede 1990). Eckstein and Gurr (1975) and Rummel (1995) support this: “Theories on the relationship between democracy and political violence generally lean towards the view that democracies are likely to experience somewhat less violent conflict and rebellion than autocracies and far less than in-between regime types, as semi-democracies” (cited in Hauge and Ellingsen 1998:304). Ellingsen and Gleditsch (1997) also find that democratic regimes are far less likely to experience civil war or armed conflict than less democratic political regimes, and the most autocratic ones are also less likely to experience civil war. In other words, neither democracies nor autocracies are very likely to get into conflicts. Democracies are open for ways of solving conflicts other than violence, while autocracies suppress any possibility of mobilizing for violent conflict. Collier and Sambanis (2002:6) say: “Deep democracy and extreme repression can lower the risk of rebellion as compared to intermediate or transitional regimes.” Contrasting West European democracies and the totalitarian states in the Soviet system with the lacking democracies left behind by the colonial powers in Africa demonstrates this say Hegre et al. (2000). Auvinen (1997) states that democratic regimes do not promise the non-existence of conflict, but since they are likely to be more widely accepted, expressions of dissatisfaction are not expected to challenging their basic principles. Marta Reynal-Querol (2002:45) puts it this way: “Democracy seems not to be a sufficient condition to prevent countries from getting involved in a civil war.” Reynal-Querol (2002) shows theoretically and empirically how countries with alternative political systems have different probabilities of experiencing a civil war. The proportional system turns out to have a lower probability of rebellion than the majoritarian system. This is because in the proportional system, the opportunity cost of rebellion is higher than in a majoritarian system. The key idea is that the more inclusive

the political system, the higher the opportunity cost of rebellion, and therefore the lower the probability of rebellion. She shows how the structure of a political system is an important mechanism that can affect the probability of civil war in a democratic system in her empirical analysis and she observes that some countries with high levels of democracy undergo phases of violence; consequently, having high levels of civil liberties and freedom does not seem to protect these countries against violence. Further she argues that the representation system of the voters in government is more vital than the level of democracy as such. Empirically, she finds “the more inclusive the system, the smaller the probability of civil war” (Reynal-Querol 2002:35). The most inclusive rule is unanimity. Nonfree systems are less inclusive than non-authoritarian countries, and plurality systems are less inclusive than proportional representation systems (Reynal-Querol 2002:29).<sup>12</sup>

Countries do not become established consolidated democracies over night. The road to democracy is difficult and can lead to internal violence and even the collapse of the state. They typically go through a shaky transition, in which mass politics mix with authoritarian elite politics in an unstable way. The risk of civil war is higher in unconsolidated democracies as well as in new regimes, including new democracies, than in deep-rooted democracies or autocracies (Hegre et al. 2000). The probability of civil war is particularly high for regimes in transition: “Countries which have undergone a political transition are more likely to experience civil war than countries whose political system have remained stable” (Hegre et al. 2000:14). Immediately after the Cold War, there was an increase in armed conflict. During this period democracy continued to spread – particularly to countries previously polarized by the Cold War (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1998). Alexis de Tocqueville (1856/1955 cited in Hegre et al. 2000:8) points out: “Revolutions do not always come when things are going from bad to worse... Usually the most dangerous time for a bad government is when it attempts to reform itself.” Huntington (1991 in Hegre et al. 2000)

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<sup>12</sup> In contrast with the majority of researchers on the relationship between regime type and conflict, the theory of resource mobilization claims that the more democratic a regime, the more conflict it will experience. The more democratic a regime is, the more possible that different groups will state political protest, non-violent as well as violent. Openness in a political system encourages political actions of all kinds, and not all of them are likely to be uttered through formal political institutions of interest articulation (Auvinen 1997). Graham and Gurr (1979) showed that democracies typically had more extensive “civil conflict” than autocracies and Eckstein and Gurr (1975) see chronic low-level conflict, “as a price democracies have to pay for freedom from regimentation, from the state or from authorities in other social units” (both cited in Auvinen 1997:180-181). According to Rupasinghe (1992 cited in Ellingsen and Gleditsch 1997), the democratic wave after the end of Cold War may produce new conflicts for the

also finds that political violence is frequently coupled with democratization. Brown (1996:576) stresses this too: “Political transitions brought about by the collapse of authoritarian rule, democratization, or political reforms also make states particularly prone to violence.” Mansfield and Snyder (1995:5) support this: “In this transitional phase of democratization, countries become more aggressive and war-prone...” Collier and Hoeffler (2000 cited in Reynal-Querol 2002:35), Hauge and Ellingsen (1998), Ellingsen (2000), Hegre et al. (2000), and Sambanis (2001) all find that midlevel democracies are more prone to civil war than high-level democracies and high-level autocracies. Hegre et al. (2000:15) say: “Among countries which have moved towards the end-points, autocracies are less stable than democracies and are therefore more likely to experience further change and thus to repeat their exposure to the more dangerous middle position.” Many political transitions have been coupled with political violence, murdering, and ethnic conflict. In Africa there have been tragedies in countries such as Rwanda, Algeria, and Sudan; in Europe violent domestic conflict has torn Yugoslavia apart and the former Soviet Union has experienced major violent conflicts in the Caucasus and in Central Asia (Hegre et al. 2000).

The reason why transition regimes are conflict prone are because someone will always come out as a loser in a process of change and want to re-establish the old order, and there will be groups that want the change to go further to get even more than they have already achieved. For the 1946-92 and 1816-1992 periods Hegre et al. (2000) find that countries that recently have experienced a civil war have a predisposition for new violence. Larger regime changes are also more dangerous than smaller changes. If regime change causes civil war, they expect the conflict to follow shortly after the change. Ellingsen and Hauge (1998) also find that political instability seems to increase the risk of domestic conflict. When they test their hypothesis and variables they find that if the country was in domestic conflict one year, it is more likely to be in conflict next year, too. Table 1 in their article (p. 309) shows that both in accounting for civil war and smaller armed conflicts, “conflict last year” had the highest explanatory power, followed by Gross National Product (GNP<sup>13</sup>) per capita (Ellingsen and Hauge 1998).

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reason that democracies allow the release of old conflicts that were formerly repressed by autocratic forces. But most researchers support the inverted U-relationship between conflict and regime type (see section 2.3).

<sup>13</sup> GNP is “the total market value of all goods and services produced in a given period by labor and property supplied by residents of a country, regardless of where the labor and property are located. GNP differs from GDP primarily by

In five geographic regions in the world in the 1990s, only two areas – Africa south of the Sahara and the Middle East (including Northern Africa) – had higher levels of autocracy than democracy. When Jagers and Gurr wrote the article “Tracking Democracy’s Third Wave with Polity III Data” (1995), the majority of countries in Africa did not qualify as democracies, not even minimally functioning democracies. But a considerable number of African countries are in the process of transition from an autocratic civilian or military government to one that is more pluralistic. The transition to liberal democracies of African states has had dangerous consequences, such as genocide in Rwanda and Burundi with political mass murdering. The prospect of establishing democracy is even more uncertain in the Middle East than in Africa. Many Arab states remain strongly autocratic because few of the countries in the Middle East have taken part in the “third wave” of democratization. Transition towards democracy is particularly dangerous (Jagers and Gurr 1995), and this argument throws considerable light on the violent conflicts in former Yugoslavia and the ex-USSR as societies in the midst of systematic change and the disintegration of federal state, and likewise on the upsurge in violence in Indonesia since the end of the Suharto regime in 1998 (Smith 2000).

Africa has been plagued with political instability since most of its countries became independent in the 1960s. The roots of Africa’s violence lie principally with the political and economic conditions that existed after the independence and the policies pursued by elites to gain and consolidate power. Between 1960 and 1980 eight civil wars took place on the continent. Ten more occurred over the next decade. Almost one-third of the world’s genocides between 1960 and 1980 (eleven of thirty-five) took place in Africa. Between 1963 and 1985, sixty-one coups d’état occurred in Africa – this is an average of almost three coups per year. Between 1960 and 1990 Africa’s conflicts accounted for more than 6.5 million deaths (Stedman 1996).

Today for the first time in history, democracies make up a majority of the states in the international system (Chan 1997) and wars may become less and less frequent as a trend toward democratization continues (Goldstein 1994). But democracy does not automatically lead to wealth and economic improvement in the short run, this is seen clearly in the early stagnation

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including the excess of capital income that residents earn from investments abroad less capital income that

following the collapse of the command economies in the former Soviet Union. However, the evolution to democracy may give rise to widespread hopes for a better future. Democracy will lead to peace in the long run even though it causes more violence in the short term. The early high level of uncertainty and unrest will gradually shrink, as protesters give up their aspirations or find other ways to get part of what they want within the new regime (Hegre et al. 2000).

#### 2.2.1.1. Consociational Democracy

Following Reynal-Querol's (2002) argument that the more inclusive the system is, the smaller the probability for civil war is, Lijphart's theory of consociational democracy is relevant here.

Gabriel A. Almond made a well-known typology of political systems in 1956 and in this typology he distinguishes between three types of Western democratic systems: Anglo-American political systems (Britain and the United States), Continental European Systems<sup>14</sup> (France, Germany, and Italy) and a third category consisting of Scandinavia and Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. The third type is not given a distinct label and is not described in detail (Lijphart 1969; Steiner 1998). Almond only states that the countries belonging to this type "combine some of the features of the Continental European and the Anglo-American" political systems, and "stand somewhere in between the Continental pattern and the Anglo-American" (Almond in Lijphart 1969:207). It is this third type that Lijphart (1969) focuses on.

In his classification Almond identified the political culture of a country<sup>15</sup> as an essential factor. He postulated that, "a homogenous political culture, like that of the two Anglo-American countries [The United States and Great Britain], is conducive to democratic stability,<sup>16</sup> whereas a fragmented political culture, as in the large continental European countries [like France, Germany, and Italy], tends to lead to democratic instability" (Steiner 1998:268). But, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland challenge his hypothesis because they are culturally

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nonresidents earn from domestic investment" (Dictionary of Politics 1980:203).

<sup>14</sup> The terms "Anglo-American" and "Continental European" are just used for convenience and do not imply that geographical location is an additional criterion distinguishing the two types of democratic systems (Lijphart 1969:207).

<sup>15</sup> For a country to be culturally fragmented, the various groups must differ in such attributes as race, language, religion, and historical roots (Steiner 1998).

<sup>16</sup> Democratic stability is that a country has a low level of civil violence and disorder both actually and potentially (Steiner 1998:270).



fragmented yet democratically stable countries. Lijphart explained this deviation by asserting that these countries practiced a consociational rather than a competitive type of decision-making. From this emerged the optimism that culturally fragmented countries could hope to achieve democratic stability if they used consociational and not competitive decision-making (Steiner 1998). These deviant countries are labelled “consociational democracies” (Lijphart 1969:211). In a consociational democracy, the leaders of the rival subcultures may engage in competitive behaviour and as a consequence further intensify mutual tensions and political stability, but they may also make “deliberate efforts to counteract the immobilizing and unstabilizing effects of cultural fragmentation (Lijphart 1969:212). A result of this can be that a country can “achieve a degree of political stability quite out of proportion to its social homogeneity” (ibid). An example of this is the fragmented and unstable Austrian First Republic of the interwar years, which was changed into the still fragmented but stable Second Republic after the Second World War by means of a consociational solution (Lijphart 1969).

The theoretical basis of Almond’s typology is the “overlapping memberships” propositions, which asserts that the psychological cross-pressures, a consequence from membership in different groups with diverse interests and outlooks, lead to moderate attitudes. Such cross-pressures operate at both mass and elite level: the leaders of social groups with heterogeneous and overlapping memberships will tend to find it required taking on moderate positions. But when a society is divided by sharp cleavages with no or very few overlapping memberships and loyalties, i.e. very deeply fragmented political culture, the pressures towards moderate mainstream positions are missing. Political stability depends on moderation and as a result also on overlapping membership. Truman (1951) expresses it like this: “In the long run a complex society may experience revolution, degeneration, and decay. If it maintains its stability, however, it may do so in large measure because of the fact of multiple memberships” (in Lijphart 1969:209).

The typology derives its theoretical importance from the relationship it sets up between political culture and social structure on one side and political stability on the other side. The Anglo-American systems have a “homogenous, secular political culture” and a “highly differentiated” role structure, in which governmental agencies, parties, interest groups, and the communication

media have specialized functions and are autonomous, though interdependent. The Anglo-American democracies demonstrate a high degree of stability and effectiveness (Lijphart 1969). The Continental European democracies in contrast are characterized by a “fragmentation of political culture” with “separate political sub-cultures.” Their roles “are embedded in the sub-cultures and tend to constitute separate sub-systems of roles” (Lijphart 1969:207). These democracies also tend to be unstable and they are characterized by political immobilism. “Immobilist democracies” are identified by “fragmentation, both in a cultural and structural sense” and by the absence of “consensus on governmental structure and process”. Such democracies are also characterized by “limited subsystem autonomy” (Lijphart 1969:209).

The most typical and obvious, but not the only possible, consociational solution for a fragmented system is the grand coalition (or “cartel of elites”). The important characteristic of consociational democracy is the deliberate cooperative attempt by the elites to stabilize the system. The desire to avoid political competition may be so strong that the cartel of elites may choose to extend the consociational principle to the electoral level in order to prevent the strong feelings provoked by elections from disturbing the carefully constructed, and possible, easily broken system of cooperation. An example of this is the Dutch parliamentary election of 1917, in which all of the parties agreed not to contest the seats held by incumbents with the aim of safeguarding the passage of a set of crucial constitutional adjustment negotiated by the cartels of the top party leaders (Lijphart 1969).

Even if consociational democracies break up the principles of majority rule, they do not diverge very much from normative democratic theory. Most democratic constitutions lay down majority rule for the normal business deal when the risks are not too high, but extra ordinary majorities or several successive majorities for the most important decisions, such as changes in the constitution. In fragmented systems, many other decisions in addition to constituent ones appear to involve high stakes, and consequently they demand more than simple majority rule (Lijphart 1969), and therefore a veto power for each subculture on matters involving its essential interests is an outstanding feature of consociational democracies (Steiner 1998). Even in the most homogenous and consensual democracies there has been resort to grand coalition in times of crisis. Both Sweden and Britain did so during the Second World War. Julius Nyerere observes,

“it is an accepted practice in times of emergency for opposition parties to sink their differences and join together in forming a national government” (Nyerere in Lijphart 1969:214).

Consociational democracy is also in agreement with the empirical “size principle” formulated by William H. Riker (1962 in Lijphart 1969:215): “In social situations similar to n-person, zero-sum games with side payments [private agreements about the division of the payoff], participants create coalitions just as large as they believe will ensure winning and no larger.” The tendency will be toward a “minimum winning coalition.” In a democracy this will be a coalition with bare majority support – but only under the conditions specified in the size principle. A vital factor of consociational democracy says Steiner (1998), is that parliamentary elections, the appointment of public officials, and the distribution of public funds among the subcultures is guided by the principle of proportionality. Each subculture should receive its quota. If a group makes up 20 % of the population, this group should receive 20 % of the top positions in the armed forces, for example. With consociational decision-making minorities also have a chance to influence policy outcomes. Consociational decision-making also indicates that the individual subcultures have a great deal of autonomy in regulating their own affairs, for examples they may have control over educational matters.

There are four factors that are conducive to consociational democracy. The first factor is that elites have the ability to accommodate the divergent interests and demands of the subcultures, and second, this requires that they have the ability to exceed cleavages and to join in a common effort with the elites of rival subcultures, and third, this in turn depends on their commitment to the maintenance of the system and to the improvement of its cohesion and stability. The last factor is that all the other requirements are based on the same assumption that the elites understand the peril of political fragmentation (Lijphart 1969:216).

For the first criterion to be fulfilled there are three factors that appear to be strongly helpful to the establishment or continuation of cooperation among elites in a fragmented system. The most outstanding of these is the existence of external threats to the country. External threats impressed on the elites the need for internal unity and cooperation. “In all of the consociational democracies the cartel of elites was moreover initiated or greatly strengthened during periods of international

crisis, especially during the First and Second World War” (Lijphart 1969:217). A second factor is a multiple balance of power among the subcultures as a replacement for either a dual balance of power or a clear hegemony by one subculture. When one group is in the majority its leaders may try to dominate rather than cooperate with the rival minority. In a society with two equally matched subcultures, the leaders of both may hope to realize their aims by domination rather than cooperation. A moderate multiparty system, in which no party is close to a majority, seems to be preferable in a consociational democracy, like in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Lebanon. In these countries all subcultures are minority groups. A third factor to inter-elite cooperation is a relatively low total load on the decision-making apparatus. This because when the burdens on the system increase, it may not be able to go on with consociational politics. In general, the size factor shows that the political burdens large states have to carry tend to be disproportionately heavier than those of small countries. Ernest S. Griffith (1956) argues, “democracy is more likely to survive, other things being equal, in small states” (in Lijphart 1969:219).

Regarding the second criterion conducive to consociational democracy, inter-sub cultural relations at the mass level, distinct lines of cleavage appear to be conducive to consociational democracy and political stability. The reason for this is that subcultures with widely divergent outlooks and interests may coexist without necessarily being in conflict: conflict takes place only when they are in contact with each other. Quincy Wright (1951) states “ideologies accepted by different groups within a society may be inconsistent without creating tension; but if ... the groups with inconsistent ideologies are in close contact ... the tension will be great” (in Lijphart 1969:219). David Easton calls this a voluntary apartheid policy: “Good social fences may make good political neighbors” (ibid). This is not in conflict with the overlapping memberships proposition: the fundamental principle in consociational democracy theory is that political elites may take joint actions to counter the effects of cultural fragmentation. But there must be made a distinction between essential homogenous political cultures and heterogeneous cultures. In the first type, increased contact is expected to lead to an increase in mutual understanding and further homogenisation. In the latter one, close contact is likely to lead to tensions and hostility. Karl W. Deutsch (1954) states that stability depends on “a balance between transaction and integration” because “the number of opportunities for possible violent conflict will increase with the volume and range of mutual transactions” (in Lijphart 1969:220).

Elite-mass relations within the subcultures are the third criterion conducive to consociational democracy. Distinct lines of cleavage among the subcultures are conducive to consociational democracy because they are likely to be associated with a high degree of internal political consistency of the subculture. This is very important to the success of consociational democracy. The elites have to cooperate and compromise with each other without losing the loyalty and support from their supporters, members of their party, organizations etc. Distinct cleavages also make it more likely that the parties and interest groups will be the organized representatives of the political subculture, and there will at least be an adequate articulation of the interest of the subcultures even if political parties may not be the best aggregators (Lijphart 1969).

The final factor that favours consociational democracy is widespread approval of the principle of government by elite level. This is an obvious factor, but of considerable importance. For example, Switzerland has a long and strong tradition of grand coalition executives and this had immeasurably strengthened Swiss consociational democracy. The Austrian grand coalition on the other hand, was under constant attack by critics (Lijphart 1969).

### **2.2.2. Economic Development and Armed Conflicts**

In the period 1989-94 there were a total of 94 armed conflicts around the world in 64 different locations. In 1994, 42 of these armed conflicts were active in 32 different locations (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1995:345), and 35 of them took place in developing countries. Of these 42 armed conflicts, 23 were located in low-income countries, 15 in middle-income countries, and only one in a high-income country (Israel). The three remaining conflicts were all in ex-Yugoslavia, where economic data for the period is lacking (World Bank 1995; UNDP 1995 cited in Hauge 1997:34). Since 1960, almost all civil wars have taken place in developing countries, “whose economic growth and development are likely to be slowed down by the resulting human capital losses, reduced investments, infrastructure destruction, and market activity disruptions” (Murdoch and Sandler 2002:91). Hauge (1997) says that most armed conflicts in the 1980s and 1990s have been internal conflicts in poor countries.

It seems self-evident that the level of economic development is related to domestic conflict and Smith (1997b:11) says there is a clear relationship between development and armed conflict: “the less, the more.” Volden and Smith (1997:5) support this: “Most of the armed conflicts between 1990 through 1995, 93 armed conflicts involving 70 states, were internal, civil wars. Most of them occurred in poorer countries of the world. It appears that the more under-developed a country is, the more likely is armed conflict, and thus the more difficult it is to achieve economically viable, environmentally responsible, and socially equitable development.”

According to the 1996 Human Development Report, the gap between the richest 20 % and the poorest 20 % of the world’s population increased from a ratio of 30:1 in 1960 to 61:1 in 1991. The poorest 20 % now own less than 1,5 % of the world’s wealth, at the same time as the richest 20 % own 85 %. As a result, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. In such conditions, armed conflict has become a chronic development problem (Volden and Smith 1997). A study of political and economic development in 65 countries from 1800 to 1960 also found that countries with a high level of economic development are less likely to experience domestic violence (Flanagan and Vogelmann 1970 cited in Hauge and Ellingsen 1998). This relationship has also found support in our earlier work say Hauge and Ellingsen (1998) (see Ellingsen 1996, 1997; Hauge 1997; Hegre et al. 1997). This relationship between level of economic development and domestic violence is what Blomberg and Hess (2002:74) label the “poverty-conflict trap”: violence and poor economic conditions go hand in hand. This is defined like “reduced levels of domestic economic activity tend to create incentives for increased external and internal conflict, which may in turn reinforce low levels of domestic economic activity.”

Most democracies are found in economically well-off countries, which means in the industrialized world (Hauge and Ellingsen 1998:304). Collier and Sambanis (2002:7) say, “most democracies are high-income countries, and high-income countries have a very low incidence of civil war.” Most countries in the third world are poor, and as Hauge (1997), Hauge and Ellingsen (1998), and Collier and Hoeffler (2002b) have shown, the occurrence of domestic armed conflict increases with decreasing GNP per capita and with heavy indebtedness. The higher GNP per capita, the less likely is civil war. GNP per capita has a negative effect on civil war. Low-income countries have the highest tendency to conflict, both in democracies, autocracies, and semi-democracies (Hauge 1997). “Low levels of economic development are denoted by several

factors, such as high commodity concentration and low sectoral diversification. These characters increase the vulnerability to instabilities in the world market and thus also the possibility of civil conflict” (Hauge 1997:39). More rapid growth reduces the risk of conflict and “the higher the initial income per capita, the lower the probability of a civil war breaking out during the following 5 years” (Collier and Hoeffler 2002b:15). Inflation reduces purchasing power and induces uncertainty within different societal groups. In Sub-Saharan Africa, inflation was found to be particularly destabilizing, whereas purchasing-power growth decreased the number of disturbances (Morrisson et al. 1993 cited in Auvinen 1997:178). Blomberg and Hess (2002) tested data from 152 countries from 1950 to 1992 to estimate the joint determination of external conflict, internal conflict, and the business cycle. They found that the occurrence of a depression alone would significantly increase the probability of internal conflict, and when combined with the occurrence of an external conflict, recession would further increase the probability of internal conflict. According to the theory of relative deprivation (see section 2.5), people are more pleased with a higher level of economic development and consequently they are less prone to rebellious action.

The majority of countries in Africa, South Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific belong in the low-and lower-middle income categories and are developing (Hauge 1997), and in 1999, 2000 and 2001 The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) stated that “Africa is the most conflict ridden region of the World and the only region in which the number of armed conflicts is on the increase” (SIPRI 1999:20 cited in Collier and Hoeffler 2002b). Africa has experienced a rising trend of conflicts because its economies have performed so poorly. Its lower per capita income and slower growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP<sup>17</sup>) both directly and substantially increase the risk of conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2002b). Its lack of democracy has also contributed to this trend (Collier and Hoeffler 2000a cited in Collier and Hoeffler 2002b). Collier and Gunning (1999) points out, “Since 1980, aggregate per capita GDP in sub-Saharan Africa has declined at almost 1 percent per annum. The decline has been widespread: 32 countries are poorer now than in 1980” (cited in Blomberg and Hess 2002:80). Goldstein (1994:513) supports this: “Per capita GDP decreased from 1981 to 1991 in Latin America, Africa and the Middle

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<sup>17</sup> GDP is “the total market value of all goods and services produced domestically during a given period. The components of GDP are consumption, gross domestic investment, government purchases of goods and services, and net exports” (Dictionary of Politics 1980:203).

East.” Africa’s economic characteristics have made it more vulnerable to conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2002b).

From this, a range of findings illustrates the negative relationship between the level of economy development and political violence and assert that this relationship seems to be a relevant control variable in studying the relations between economic performance and political conflict.

### **2.3. *The Hypothesis of an Inverted U-Curve***

A number of works support the hypothesis of an inverted U-curve between democracy and domestic violence. Empirical support say Hegre et al. (2000), can be found in the work of de Nardo (1985), Francisco (1995), Muller (1985), Muller and Seligson (1987), Ellingsen and Gleditsch (1997), and in the article written by Hegre et al. (2000).

It was Ted Robert Gurr that initially proposed the hypothesis of an inverted U relationship between governmental acts of coercion and political violence. But it has never been tested effectively and convincingly because “the explanatory variables are composite measures that are difficult, if not impossible, to interpret and are also are constructed according to criteria that favor deprivation hypotheses” (Muller and Weede 1990:627). Gurr is known principally as a proponent of relative deprivation theory (see section 2.5), but his major theoretical work, *Why Men Rebel* (1970), includes a set of rational action hypotheses, subsumed under the concept of utilitarian justifications for political violence. However, his theory is a deprivation one rather than a rational action explanation one because the major premise is that socio-economic conditions that cause relative deprivation have a general effect on the magnitude of political violence in a country, independent of other causes of violence (Muller and Weede 1990).

Opportunity and grievance is two important factors in the hypothesis of an inverted U-curve. Violent civil conflict, especially organized violence such as civil war, is casually related to these two factors, and both are a function of the structure of the political system. They operate consequently collectively to determine the probability of that a country will experience a civil war say Hegre et al. (2000). Opportunity relates to a “dissatisfied group’s ability to organize violently against the state” (Hegre et al. 2000:4). The more open the state, the greater the



opportunities for rebellion. On the other hand, closed authoritarian or totalitarian states offer few opportunities for revolt. Opportunity reflects state openness and lack of repression. Closed and repressive systems are less prone to rebellion since protest is never allowed in the first place. Tilly (1978 cited in Hegre et al. 2000) stresses that organized rebellion and political violence, such as civil war, are rooted in the interactions between a protesting group and the government. How a government reacts to protesters has a lot to say in determining whether the protests become violent. Opportunity is for that reason operationalized as the level of democracy (Hegre et al. 2000). Grievance refers to a “group’s dissatisfaction with the state” (Hegre et al. 2000:4) and grievance is operationalized as the lack of democracy (Hegre et al. 2000:6). Grievance is shaped by state repression, reflected in a group’s interest in protesting in the first place. Dissatisfied groups with a history of grievances are more expected to rebel. Grievance is easy to identify in non-democracies. Väyrynen (1997 cited in Hegre et al. 2000:4) examines a broader set of humanitarian emergencies, by which he means deep crises in which a large number of people suffer or die from war, hunger, disease, and displacement. He concludes that such crisis “are results of deformed, exclusionary, and undemocratic politics.”

This conceptualization of opportunity and grievance in some ways reflects the resource mobilization theory of Tilly (1978), say Hegre et al. (2000). According to resource mobilization theory violent rebellion take place when it is a viable and salient option. Autocratic repression can suppress rebellion of any sort, making civil war nonviable. Democracies, in contrast, allow non-violent options for protest, thereby making civil war less salient. Civil war is therefore most likely when non-violent options of protest are closed off and repression is present but limited. These notions of viability and salience, in this way, can be seen in terms of opportunity and grievance (Hegre et al. 2000).

By accounting for opportunity and grievance, the relationship between degree of democracy and civil war put on the shape of an inverted U-curve. Neither democracies nor autocracies are very likely to experience civil conflict. The level of repression also has an effect on the opportunity cost of rebellion. Democratic government opens up a variety of ways for addressing conflict without resorting to violence, while autocracy represses any possibility of mobilizing for violent conflict. Muller and Weede (1990) interpret this in a rational actor perspective: If repression is

high (as in autocracies), rebellion is irrational because of high costs and small likelihood of success. If repression is low (as in democracies), the benefits of peaceful negotiations exceed the benefits of violent conflict. In the area in-between, at moderate levels of democratization, there is both grievance as well as opportunity to engage in violent conflict behaviour. Reynal-Querol (2002) says the more political rights and civil liberties a country has, the higher opportunity cost of rebellion, and as a result, the lower the probability of groups to rebel. On the other hand, a little freedom is necessary to let groups/people organize. According to freedom, “civil wars occur only when rebel groups are able to build large organizations” (Collier and Hoeffler 2002b:14). Hegre et al. (2000) say that conflict is most likely to occur in semi-democracies, when there is both opportunity and grievance.

Hegre et al.’s (2000) core analysis with all the variables make use of data for the period 1946-92. They tested their independent variables (opportunity and grievance), their dependent variable (outbreak of civil war) together with seven control variables (development, ethnic heterogeneity, proximity of independence, international war, proximity of civil war, neighboring civil war and civil war in another region) and the inverted U-curve is confirmed. Energy consumption was also included in their model to control for level of development. They found that the highest frequency of conflict occurs in semi-democracies, yielding a clearly inverted U-curve both in First-world and Third-world countries. Their analysis clearly confirms the parabolic relationship between democracy and civil war:

“Regimes that obtain middle scores on the “Polity Democracy-Autocracy” index have a significantly higher probability of civil war than either democracies or autocracies. The risk of civil war is highest when both opportunity and grievance are present. In the short run, regime change clearly and strongly increases the probability of civil war. The combination of opportunity and grievance found in semi-democracies makes them more prone to violent domestic conflict even when they have had time to stabilize from the regime change. Larger regime changes appear to be more dangerous than smaller. And there is a democratic civil peace. The reduction of grievances more than outweighs the increase of opportunity” (Hegre et al. 2000:34-35).

Ellingsen and Gleditsch (1997) also confirmed the inverted U-curve using data on violent domestic conflict for the period 1945-94. They found more violence in the in-between regime type than in democracies and autocracies, just what they expected to find. Their expectation about civil war to be non-existent in the most highly developed democracies was also confirmed. Even democracies in the third world experience civil war very rarely.

Muller (1985) and Muller and Seligson (1987) also found support for the inverted U-relationship say Muller and Weede (1990:627):

“The repressiveness of political institutions (regime repressiveness) and political violence, where the rationale is that the severe costs of rebellion in an extremely repressive political system inhibit resource mobilization by dissident groups, the availability of reasonably effective peaceful means of political action in a nonrepressive political system makes rebellion as undesirable strategy of opposition for most people but rebellion is likely to be the preferred strategy of opposition for many dissident groups in the context of a semirepressive political system in which resource mobilization is possible and peaceful mobilization typically is ineffective.”

Muller and Weede (1990:627, footnote 4) say consistency is much easier for governments to maintain if they resort to repression either very rarely or very frequently rather than somewhere in between.

## **2.4. *What Types of Armed Conflicts Arise?***

The type of political regime is likely to affect both the extent and form of political conflict and has a role to play in both relative deprivation and resource mobilization theories (Auvinen 1997).

The relative deprivation theory focuses on the degree to which the people accept the regime, in other words, the regimes legitimacy. If a government is capable to deliver material goods, it can at least temporarily achieve support and prevent economic deprivation. But legitimacy is not only material defined. Political deprivation occurs if the regime put a stop to a meaningful participation in the making of political decisions, whether this participation is prohibited by law

or through repression. A constant and frequent use of repression indicates lack of legitimacy and political capacity (Jackman 1993 cited in Auvinen 1997). Efficient repression may draw out authoritarian rule, but sooner or later the people will rid themselves of the illegitimate rulers (Auvinen 1997).

Organized violence such as civil war is casually related to two factors: opportunity and grievance (see section 2.3). Opportunity and grievance operate together to determine the probability of that a country will experience a civil war and therefore, the type of political regime influences whether challenges take the form of protest or rebellion. Autocratic repression can suppress rebellion of any sort, making civil war nonviable, but in autocracies the conflict that arises is much more likely to take a violent turn if the opposition is able to breach a hole in the repression. This is because political protests are suppressed by an autocratic regime. Democracies, in contrast, allow non-violent options for protest, in so doing making civil war less salient. Civil war is for that reason most likely when non-violent options of protest are closed off and repression is present but limited (Hegre et al. 2000). Democracies are ten times more likely to experience protest, but they avoid violent conflict (Gurr and Lichbach 1981 cited in Hegre et al. 2000). Autocratic governments faced proportionally three times as much revolutionary opposition, but were less likely to pay attention to reformist demands than democratic governments (Gurr and Lichbach 1986 in Auvinen 1997). In Chile, the coup d'état of 1973 interrupted a long tradition of democratic rule. Legitimate opposition was disallowed and repressed, which led to the development of new and radical forms of political resistance (Auvinen 1996 cited in Auvinen 1997).

Democracies may not discourage political protest, but they are successful in reducing the likelihood of rebellion (Auvinen 1997). Gurr (1979 cited in Hegre 2000) found that in democratic countries rebellious people very rarely had revolutionary objectives; reformist demands were ten times more common. Civil conflicts were less deadly in democracies than in autocracies (Graham and Gurr 1979 cited in Auvinen 1997). The level of democracy influences the probability of civil war; therefore “the most reliable way to stable peace in the long run is to democratize as much as possible” (Hegre et al. 2000:15).

## **2.5. The Theory of Relative Deprivation**

Almost all literature on civil conflict assumes that there is an underlying connection between the existence of frustration (or “disequilibrium,” or “interference”) and strife (Gurr 1968). What Ted Robert Gurr tries to explain in his book, *Why Men Rebel* (1970) is some general answers to basic question about our sporadic nature to disrupt violently the order we otherwise work so hard to maintain? In Gurr’s theory, the major premise is that socioeconomic conditions that cause relative deprivation have a general effect on the magnitude of political violence in a country. The basic premise is that the necessary precondition for violent conflict is relative deprivation. The disposition to political violence “...depends on how badly societies violate socially derived expectations about the means and ends of human action” (Gurr 1970:317).

The theory of political violence can with a few words be sketched like this: the first is the development of discontent, then politicization of the discontent, and finally its “actualization in violent action against political objects and actors” (Gurr 1970:13). In Gurr’s study of political violence, political violence refers to “all collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors – including competing political groups as well as incumbents – or its policies” (Gurr 1970:3).

### **2.5.1. Relative Deprivation Defined**

Relative deprivation is defined as actors’ perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their environment’s apparent value capabilities (Gurr 1968:37). Relative deprivation is used to denote the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the “ought” and the “is” of collective value satisfactions, this can be economic, psychosocial, or political values and that disposes men to violence, such as civil war (Gurr 1970).

Relative deprivation embraces the following concepts: Values, value expectations, value position, and value capabilities. Values are the desired events, objects, and conditions for which men strive and the goal objects of human motivation, attributable to or derived from basic “needs” or “instincts.” For a theory of political violence, the values most relevant are the general categories of conditions valued by many men, not those sought by individuals.

The value expectations of a collectivity are “the average value positions to which its members believe they are justifiably entitled” (Gurr 1970:27), i.e. “the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled” (Gurr 1970:13). Value expectations refer to both present and future conditions. Generally, men expect to keep what they have. They also normally have a set of expectations and demands about what they should have in the future, and these expectations is usually as much or more than what they have at present.

A value position is “the amount or level of a value actually attained” (Gurr 1970:27). A general force to collective action is widespread discontent. When a person does not receive what he thinks he has the right to receive relative deprivation occurs. This leads to frustration and this in turn can motivate people to political protests and violence. The greater the intensity of discontent, the more likely is violence: “The strength of anger tends to vary as a power function of the perceived distance between the value position sought or enjoyed and the attainable or residual value position” (Gurr 1968:44). The value capabilities of a collectivity are the average value positions its members perceive themselves capable of attaining or maintain (Gurr 1970:27), i.e. “the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining or maintaining, given the social means available to them” (Gurr 1970:13). There are present and future connotations to value capabilities also. Value positions are present connotations: what men have actually been able to attain or have been provided by their environment. Value potential are future connotations: what men believe their skills, their fellows, and their rulers will, in the course of time, permit them to keep or attain (Gurr 1970).

Runciman (1966) says that the linked idea of relative deprivation and reference group both originate from the idea that people’s attitudes, aspirations and grievances mainly depend on the frame of reference within which they are imagined. A person’s satisfactions are conditioned by his expectations, and a well-known way to make oneself aware of one’s advantages is to contrast one’s situation with that of others worse off than oneself. The frame of reference can work in either of two ways: On the one hand, a man who has been led to look forward to promotion in his job will be more upset if he fails to attain promotion than a man whose ambitions have not been similarly heightened. Alternatively, a man taken to hospital for a small accident will feel a good deal less sorry for himself if he is put in a bed next to the victim of a serious accident who has been permanently injured. The similar is relevant at the level of classes or even nation. People

will be less dissatisfied with what they have if they have no motive to expect or hope for more than they can achieve, and they can even be thankful simply to be able to hold on to what they already have. But if they have been led to see the opportunity of some more fortunate as a possible goal for someone they can directly compare themselves with, then they will remain discontented with their lot until they have succeeded in catching up the relative prosperity (Runciman 1966).

### **2.5.2. Violence: Who and Why?**

Intense frustrations can motivate men either to intense, short-term attacks or less severe attacks on their frustrators. The tactic chosen is probably a function of gain, opportunity and fear of revenge. Most people tend to have hierarchies of response to repeated frustration. There are obviously degrees of anger, from mild unhappiness to blind rage: mild deprivation is motivating few to violence, moderate deprivation pushes more in the direction of violence and very intense deprivation is likely to get a lot of members of a political community in undertaking violence. In Gurr's study (1970) there is not much support for the view that political violence is primarily a resource of vicious, criminal, deviant, ignorant, or undersocialized people. All categories of men and women, from every social background have resorted to violence against their rulers. Most discontented men are not revolutionaries although they may be angry. Most of them prefer peaceful means for the attainment of their goals instead of the risks of revolutionary action. Suppose that their primary motive is to increase their well-being and not satisfy anger through violence, their optimum strategy lies between those of elites – who would maintain an order – and that of revolutionaries – who would destroy that order to establish a new one. All discontented men's objective is to improve their own lot as much as possible. To reach the goal they have to seek new means and resources. It is not said that political violence is excluded from their repertory of tactics, some violence may be necessary, but it depends on the circumstances. A primary tactical concern is the fact that they want to minimize retaliatory action in response to their actions. "Man lives mentally in the near future as much as in the present. Actual or anticipated interference with what he has, and with the act of striving itself, are all volatile sources of discontent" (Gurr 1968:41).

### **3. Irish History**

#### **3.1. *Islands at War***

The condition of affairs suggested by the term “the Irish Troubles” was already some three centuries old when Columbus discovered America. Long before the discovery of America, a degree of strife between the inhabitants of the islands of what now constitute Ireland and the UK existed. For example, Irish pirates, after one of their frequent forays against the neighboring isle, brought St. Patrick to Ireland supposedly in 432. St. Patrick was a Briton, whom legend has established as the Irish National Apostle.

Only some twelve miles of water between the Antrim coast and the Mull of Kintyre separates Ireland and Scotland. The southeastern coasts of Wexford and Waterford are still no more than eighty miles from the coast of Wales. It was in this area that the first serious Norman penetrations took place during the late 1160s. “To the physical force school of Irish nationalism the Norman coming is generally regarded as the starting point for ‘eight hundred years of British oppression’” (Coogan 1995:1). As a result, geography had dictated that Ireland and Scotland/England had both shared and escaped great events together by the time the Normans arrived. The Romans conquered England in the early centuries A.D. (Fitzsimmons 1993), but they decided not to attempt to extend their imperium to Ireland after having looked across the turbulent Irish Sea and weighed up the difficulties of suppressing the equally stormy population of the then thickly forested isle in the west (Coogan 1995). “Insularity therefore ensured that, unlike its neighbour, Ireland did not become influenced by Roman laws and culture or, for some centuries, by significant changes in living patterns such as the developments of cities” (Coogan 1995:2). Cities only began to develop after the coming of the Vikings in the ninth century long after the Roman legions had left. Gaelic society continued to be concentrated on cattle rearing, rather than on tillage. But Ireland had achieved relatively high levels of learning and wealth long before the coming of Christianity. Indicators as the near-Pharaonic knowledge of mathematics and building skills needed to construct huge tombs, like that at Newgrange in County Meath, or the survival of skillfully worked golden artefacts suggest that. Though Irish cultural reaching was significant, it



lay, and continued to lie, against a different backdrop to that taking place in England. It was the concentrating of wealth that first attracted the Vikings to Ireland. The authority of the Vikings was broken in 1014 at the battle of Clontarf. In this battle the armies of the provinces of Connacht and Munster, under the leadership of Brian Boru, defeated the armies of Leinster, under King Maelmordha, for the high-kingship of Ireland. It was the destruction of Maelmordha's forces that resulted in breaking the grip of the Norse King Sitric of Dublin. Dublin, because of its fleets and anchorage facilities, had effectively grown into the commercial and political capital of the country. From that moment on the Norse influence remained all over the country, particularly at Wexford and Waterford, but the dominant influence became Gaelic once more (Coogan 1995).

### **3.2. *From the Norman Invasion to the Battle of Boyne***

The Norman invasion of Ireland took place in 1169. The Normans had ruled England since 1066 when Wilhelm the Conqueror seized the English throne in the Battle of Hastings. But the Normans did not invade Ireland on their own initiative; it was more like an "expansion by invitation" (Kenyon 1994 cited in Hagen 1999:28). King of Leinster, Diarmuid MacMurchada called for the help of the English King Henry II (1154-1189<sup>18</sup>) in putting down his local enemies and after much negotiations and setbacks a delegation of Norman knights and their followers arrived on the Wexford coast in 1169. The Normans captured the major cities in the area of Waterford and Wexford and in the end they gained control over Dublin (Coogan 1995). But Henry II feared there would be established an independent Norman power out of English judicial power. In 1171 he arrived Ireland with a papal bull that provided him the lordship of Ireland. In this way, an English presence was established in Ireland (Kenyon 1994 cited in Hagen 1999:28). MacMurchada is up to this day "execrated by some in Ireland for thus make the first move both to the "eight hundred years of British oppression" and its outcome, "The Full National Demand" of later generations of Irish nationalists" (Coogan 1995:3).

Ireland lay too close to England for self-determination, but lay just too far away for complete conquest, unlike the other Celtic regions of Wales and Scotland. Ireland continued all through the centuries to be a problem for England. Through invasions and settlements by the Tudors, the

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<sup>18</sup> Aschehoug og Gyldendal STORE NORSKE Leksikon (bind 4, 1987:409).

Stuarts, Oliver Cromwell, and William of Orange amongst others, the English throne constantly tried, with varying degrees of success, to exert its influence in Ireland. The earlier difficulties regarding geography and terrain were to a degree overcome by the Irish tendency to either battle amongst themselves, or follow MacMurchada's example of forming alliances with the outsiders (Coogan 1995).

The Irish continued to be loyal to Rome during the Reformation. This included also the "old English," as the descendants of the original settlers became to known, while the Crown forces were Protestant. This grouping become very important during the rule of the English King James I (1603-1625<sup>19</sup>): "He added to the pro-Protestant policies of the Tudors, and their resultant slaughter, by "planting" six of the north-eastern counties of Ulster, in the process creating the new county of Londonderry around the hinterland of the ancient settlement of Derry" (Coogan 1995:5). For colonists of all classes from England, Scotland and Wales, by generous offers of land, the plantation of Ulster in 1609 set out to be a magnet. In that way, the Ulster plantation was unique among Irish plantations (Darby 1995) and English colonists, Scottish Presbyterians and Episcopalians sequestered Irish land. Undertakers, the planters with the biggest holdings were not allowed to have Irish tenants, but the smaller estate holders, known as Servitors, were permitted to take Irish tenants. However, if they did so, their rents would rise (Coogan 1995).

The Irish natives stayed, but they were excluded from the towns built by the Planters and banished to the mountains and bogs on the margins of the land they had until that time owned. Basically, the plantation of Ulster sought to move a society to Ireland. The sum of the plantation of Ulster was the "introduction of a foreign community, which spoke a different language, represented an alien culture and way of life, including a new type of land tenure and management" (Darby 1995:16). Most of the newcomers were Protestants by religion, while the native Irish were Catholics. Two hostile groups, one believing the land had been taken over and the other believing that their residence was constantly under threat of rebellion, occupied the same territory. Generally, they lived in distinct neighborhoods and they identified their differences as religious and cultural as well as territorial (Darby 1995).

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<sup>19</sup> Fitzsimmons 1993:14.

The Protestants and Catholics had different interests and motives to act on. During the sixteenth century the Catholics started to organize themselves against the Protestants. The Catholics feared ethnical discrimination. Following this, the Protestants started to organize too to protect themselves from attacks done by the Catholics. The first offensive from the Catholic side took place in 1641. It started as a peaceful rising, where many Catholic leaders brought together a rival parliament in Kilkenny, “The Confederation of Kilkenny,” as an attempt to demonstrate that they were indispensable as political leaders in Ireland. The peaceful riot developed quickly into a violent one (Boyce 1995:chapter 3), and the mass murdering by Catholics of Protestants settlers occurred in the religious wars of 1640s (Coogan 1995). Even if the confederation and riot only comprised parts of the Catholic population and hit only parts of the Protestant population, elements of hate, fear, and suspiciousness were added to the already existing separation of the groups (Hagen 1999). These elements become very important for the growth of the conflict between Catholics and Protestants, as Donald L. Horowitz (1985:182) says: “Without feelings of antipathy, there can be no ethnic conflict.” The feeling of antipathy increased rapidly between Catholics and Protestants in 1649 when the English army arrived in Ireland as an answer to the Catholic mass murdering. Under the leadership of Cromwell, the army attacked and massacred Catholics (Kenyon in Hagen 1999). “The Act of Settlement” was adopted in 1652, and in effect, this act divided the people of Ireland into “English Protestants” and “Irish Papists.” The land of the Papists was declared forfeit, with the exception of the province of Connaught. The forfeited land was to be divided between the Government and the soldiers. In other words, this act resulted in all land owned by the King possessed by Catholics was confiscated. The portion land possessed by Catholics decreased dramatically, from about 60 % in 1641 to 8-9 % in 1660 (Boyce 1995).

The hatred between Catholics and Protestants got intensified in the years 1688-1689 when the Catholic English King James II (1685-1688<sup>20</sup>) allied with the Catholics in Ireland in an attempt to retain the English throne. As a payment for the Catholic support James II cancelled the confiscation of land from 1652. He also called together a parliament where the Catholics had the majority. But William of Orange, James II’s rival and nephew, “rescued” the Protestants at the

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<sup>20</sup> Fitzsimmons 1993:18.

Battle of Boyne in 1690.<sup>21</sup> William of Orange had a significantly larger force than James II had. There was no massive bloodletting, but William's troops were the clear victors (Fitzsimmons 1993; Hagen 1999). Following the Battle of Boyne, The Treaty of Limerick was signed in October 1691. This treaty promised the Catholics religious toleration, security in their property, and freedom to practice their professions. But the Protestants never fulfilled the promises and instead the Penal Laws<sup>22</sup> were enacted. These laws worsen the Catholics situation even more; Catholicism was given only the barest legal toleration (Fitzsimmons 1993).

The upheaval in the political and economical distribution of power, done by English politics, set the basis for a never-ending ethnical conflict in Ireland given the reactions the policy provoked. Both Catholics and Protestants felt they could demand the land: the Catholics claimed right of ownership on the basis that they were there first; the Protestants based their claim on the fact that they had been assigned the land from the English Crown. Both groups had fair arguments for their claims. This gave little room for compromises: either you dominate or you are dominated (Hagen 1999). Tilly (1978) asserts that groups resort to violence when they feel they have a morally and legitimate claim to what they try to get. In Ireland this have laid the basis for a seeming never-ending circle of attack, defend, and reciprocate.

From the political community made by the English policy, two societies grew up with common identity within the two groups: "The Catholics of Ireland – whatever their diverse origin – soon came to regard themselves as heirs to a common tradition; a tradition of spoliation, persecution, and defeat. Land and religion became central to this experience" (Boyce 1995:89). The Protestants were living in an economically and politically privileged position and therefore had something to defeat. This characterized Protestants' identity and spirit of community. Secondly, the Protestant were numerically in minority (1:3) in ratio to the Catholics and therefore very vulnerable to the Catholic claim about redistribution of land and political power. The Protestants feared also that the Catholics would attack them like in 1641, 1689 and later in 1798<sup>23</sup> (Hagen 1999). Following this, the Protestants developed a special "siege mentality" (Stewart 1977:47).

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<sup>21</sup> Hagen (1999:34) uses the year 1689 for the Battle of Boyne. But Coogan (1995:5), Fitzsimmons (1993:18) and Cochrane (1999:8 and 317) use the year 1690, and so do I.

<sup>22</sup> See section 3.3.

<sup>23</sup> The Confederation of Kilkenny (1641), The Siege of Derry (1689). See section 3.3 for the 1798 rebellion.

They felt like they were under continuous siege of the Catholics that surrounded them everywhere: “The factor which distinguishes the siege of Derry from all other historic sieges in the British Isles is that it is still going on” (Stewart 1977:53). This was a distinctive problem in Ulster where the largest group of Protestants lived, but in Ulster the plantation plans was not carried out in accordance with the original plans.<sup>24</sup> If the Protestants should manage to defend themselves from Catholics attacks, they had to stick together. The Protestants did not only fear the Catholics, but also the betrayal of each other. John Whyte (1978:278) asserts that the intensity in the conflict between Protestants and Catholics was caused by the Protestants’ “double suspiciousness”: “It is because Protestants distrust Protestants, not just because Protestants distrust Catholics that the Ulster conflict is so tense.”

### **3.3. *Ireland: A Part of Great Britain***

The seventeenth century was characterized by relative peace between the two segments. At the end of the century many of the most discriminating Penal Laws were abolished (Fitzsimmons 1993). The period between 1704 and 1775 in Ireland was the era of the Penal Laws, that “haphazard but effective accumulation of statutes that collectively excluded the entire Catholic population from the political and public life of the country” (Stewart 1977:103). For Catholics, it was nearly impossible to own property, receive an education, or enter the professions without give up their religion (Stewart 1977). In 1778 the Penal Law from 1704, which prevented Catholics from inheriting and hiring land, was abolished. In 1782 Catholics were permitted “full rights to deal in real property; however, full privileges of citizenship, including the right to vote and to hold public office, were still denied them” (Fitzsimmons 1993:21). However, an act was also passed confirming all previous legislation on land settlement (like “The Act of Settlement”) to calm down the Protestants (Boyce 1995).

In 1793, a Catholic Relief Act was passed. This Act allowed Catholics admittance to the professions and granted Catholics the right to vote in parliament elections, if they fulfilled certain condition concerning land, and in local elections. But the possibility of becoming members of

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<sup>24</sup> More land than planned was rented to the Irish natives because there was hardly anyone to rent out the land to. In addition, many Scottish people settled down in Ulster. This resulted in a mixture of people living there and this

Parliament was still denied them (Fitzsimmons 1993). This paved the way for more equality of status between the two groups, something that troubled the Protestant minority. They feared to be trapped in a Catholic dominated Ireland once a time. The day the Catholics eventually have the power in Ireland, the Protestants are afraid of that the roles will be changed and that they will be “under the feet of Catholics (...) to be governed as a conquered race” (Lee 1989 cited in Hagen 1999:36). On this background the Protestants placed confidence that the Union with England would give them the necessary protection. Within the UK the Protestants would only be one of many more minorities, in opposition to in Ireland, and they felt that this membership gave them some confidence. Foster (1988:36) says, “...The Union was identified as their [the Protestants] guarantee of protection.”

The fight for Ireland’s independence and relationship to England was, so to say, handed over to the Catholics and the future conflict between Protestants and Catholics came to turn up on this question. This resulted in a new split: between Nationalists and Unionists. The Nationalists wanted self-governance for Ireland, the Unionists wished Ireland to remain a part of the UK (Hennessey 1997).

London regarded the Protestant settlers in Ireland not merely as members of the favoured Church but as bulwarks of the Crown. For instance, Catholic peasants’ disturbance during the 1770s in the south was put down by the means of forces raised amongst northern Protestants. But it was Protestants who had given London most pauses for thought as the seventeenth century closed. The Protestant ruling class set up their own volunteer force in 1782 inspired by the revolutions in America and France. This force should defend Ireland from any enemy. The setting-up of a parliament in Dublin in 1783 was the result of the strength of the Irish Volunteers, which forced the British to agree to this. The parliament was submissive to the House of Commons, and the parliament was, just like the Volunteers, dominated by the landowning Protestant Ascendancy, mostly Anglicans or Church of Ireland. The Anglicans looked with disapproval on one section of Protestantism, almost with as much disrespect as they did Catholics, and the section was the Presbyterian Dissenters in the north of Ireland. They also suffered a certain amount of disability under the law and as a consequence this encouraged some of them to make common cause with

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caused the Protestants feeling of being under siege. The living from the sixteenth century has been very stable and

the Catholics (Coogan 1995). In a way the British rulers were back where Henry II had found himself when his knights march into Ireland in the first place, back in 1169. The knights had quickly grown so influential that the King had to come to Ireland at the head of an army to take special control of the just beginning situation. At this time, five hundred years on, the government in London felt an identical need to take control of events in Ireland, but with other methods (Coogan 1995).

At the same time, Catholics came to be organized into a secret, oathbound society, “The Society of United Irishmen.” This society was founded by middle-class Protestants in 1791 and Theobald Wolfe Tone is regarded as the founder, he was Protestant and he is considered as the father of Irish Republicanism. The plan of the United Irishmen was to unite Catholics, Protestants and Dissenters in setting up an Irish republic, which would break away from England. This plan could only be reality if these groups worked together (Coogan 1995; Stewart 1977). Another important society was founded in the ranks of the Catholics’ opponents in the same year. The Orange Society was founded after a bloody battle between Catholics and Protestants at Loughgall in County Armagh 1795 (Coogan 1995) (see section 3.5.3). This clash, known now as the Battle of Diamond, is one of the major events in Orange folk history, together with two other incidents in the seventeenth century when Protestants prevailed over Catholics. The other incidents are the Siege of Derry in 1689 and the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 (McKittrick and McVea 2000). In 1796, the Orange Society, which swiftly became the Orange Order, held its first Twelfth of July demonstration (Coogan 1995). In later years the Orange Order established what came to be known as the marching season, holding hundreds of parades during the summer months. In the nineteenth century these gave rise to recurring riots, particularly in Belfast (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

A prime source of the public disgrace connected to things English was the behaviour of the British Army. The soldiers were commonly billeted on by force at unwilling Catholics and in 1798 Ireland was a state in rebellion. The 1798 rebellion fully lived up to the traditions of dreadfulness well known over the previous centuries. The rebellion itself, and particular the imprisonment of Wolfe Tone and a part of the French navy which he was bringing to Ireland

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can be observed in Northern Ireland today (Stewart 1977 in Hagen 1999:35).

gave the British an argument for bringing the Irish parliament to an end without dissolving it (Coogan 1995).

In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Daniel O’Connell’s campaign for Catholic emancipation was the greatest mass movement to emerge in the country following the Union. In 1829 emancipation was finally conceded and was followed in 1837 by the Tithe Commutation Act, which put an end to a major source both of Catholic complaint and of sectarian conflict. By law, the Catholics had been forced to donate a tithe of their income to the maintenance of a church that was not theirs. The tradition of underground secret agrarian societies came alive once again in Ireland because the unfairness of the tithe system finally led to a “tithe war.” The “Tithe War” ended in the “Rathcormack Massacre” in County Cork during May 1834. A score of peasants were killed and several more wounded during fighting that broke out over the collection of forty shillings in tithe debts from a Catholic widow. By that time O’Connell had put together up what deserves to be regarded as the first successful non-violent civil rights organization in history: “The Catholic Association” (CA). O’Connell was also the leader of “The National Repeal Association,” founded in April 1840. Both this organization and the CA fought to give Catholics better political rights. The right to vote for Catholics was extended in 1829. O’Connell was loyal to the British King; he did not wish for complete independence for Ireland. But repeal of the Union did not become a success. After the British declared illegal a huge meeting, which O’Connell had intended to address at Clontarf in 1843, the repeal movement lost momentum. O’Connell called the meeting off because he feared a slaughter if he not (Coogan 1995). His movement collapsed as a result of the Great Potato Famine that lasted from 1845 and ended with the last partial potato crop failure in 1949 (Foster 1988). O’Connell died in 1847 and the following year the Young Irelanders Revolution, part of a group of O’Connell’s more radical young opponents faded gradually out (Coogan 1995). About as many as one million people starved and a million more emigrated during the famine.<sup>25</sup> Approximately 800,000 people (some 1/10 of the population) died from hunger and disease (Boyce 1995:170).<sup>26</sup>

Another outcome of the famine that had lasting impact was the formulation of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in 1858 in Dublin, the brotherhood also known as the Fenian movement.

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<sup>25</sup> Cited from [www.utexas.edu](http://www.utexas.edu).



The following year it spread to New York, where the movement became known as Clann Na Gael (Family of Gaels) (Coogan 1995). The IRB and the Fenians were dedicated to overthrowing the union by the use of physical force (Darby 1995). The IRB was a lineal descendant of the United Irishmen, and an oath-bound secret society. A planned uprising in 1867 fizzled out with nothing much in the way of military activity beyond some dynamite explosions in London and other cities because the British infiltrated the movement. Nevertheless, separatists of the physical force tradition respect the Young Irelanders for ensuring there was a rising in every generation (Coogan 1995).

The O'Connellite demand for repeal became adapted to a call for Home Rule (Coogan 1995). Some degree of political autonomy was called for because of the inability of Britain to successfully integrate Ireland politically or culturally into a viable model of common citizenship throughout the nineteenth century. The most central point to be aware of is that the Home Rule movement was neither revolutionary nor separatist. There were two views how this local autonomy should be. The first one was complete independence and the second one was some ambiguous form of decentralization. There was also difference of opinion about the methods that should be used to realize these ends. One group took the view that revolutionary Nationalism was the only means available to attain the goal of independence. The roots of this group can be traced through the IRB and the emergence of Sinn Féin to the physical-force tradition of Irish Republicanism that remains in Ireland today. The other group within the emerging Irish Nationalist movement was less ambitious in its goals and more pragmatic in its political strategy (Cochrane 1999).

From the 1870s and after this, the political activities from the Catholics side become more and more concentrated on Ireland's relationship to England (Boyce 1995). The new Catholic movement "The Home Government Association" (HGA) contributed to this. The primary principles of the HGA were federalist. They wanted separate legislations for England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland and these legislations should derive their authority from the UK parliament. In other words, the HGA struggled for more self-government for Ireland, not completely independence. The Fenian movement strongly supported the HGA under the management of

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<sup>26</sup> But Foster (1988:345) stresses, "statistics are notoriously unreliable."

Isaac Butt. In 1873 the HGA became a political party and after the Westminster General Election of January 1874, the HGA turned into the Irish Parliamentary Party under the management of Butt and Charles Stewart Parnell (Cochrane 1999).

British Conservatives who feared the demand for limited self-governance within the UK could damage British authority in other parts of the empire opposed this demand (Cochrane 1999). The 1885 general election gave Parnell and the IPP sufficient parliamentary power to make the decision whether the Liberals or the Conservatives would form the new British government. The IPP again sided with William Gladstone and the Liberals, as the Conservatives said no to Home Rule and Gladstone became Prime Minister for the third time (Fitzsimmons 1993). The increasing prospect for Home Rule deeply troubled almost all of Ireland's Protestants. Many of these Protestants were intolerant of Catholics and narrow-minded and to them, it would have been absolutely unacceptable to be outnumbered by Catholics in government after centuries of "Protestant ascendancy." Consequently, many in Ireland began to turn to passively resisting any Home Rule government. If necessary they would use force of arms against such a government. Some Irish Protestants were afraid that Catholics would take revenge upon them in return for old unpaid complaints, as the majority in a Home Rule government would be Catholics. Other Irish Protestants basically felt that Home Rule would be harmful to their own and to Ireland's welfare. Many of the Protestants did not wish for Ireland's political ties with Britain to be broken and they thought of Home Rule as the first step toward Ireland becoming independent. Otherwise different Irish Protestants were able for the first time to join together politically because of these various feelings and concerns had a common ground in opposing Home Rule. As a result the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union was organized in Dublin in 1885, and in early 1886 a Loyalist Anti-Repeal Union was formed in Ulster (Fitzsimmons 1993).

In April 1886 Gladstone presented the first of three Home Rule Bills. The bill was defeated. The second Home Rule Bill, presented in early 1893, again by Gladstone, passed through the Commons but was thrown out by the House of Lords. Once again there was great political excitement in Ulster, and further steps were taken towards a policy of active resistance (Fitzsimmons 1993; Stewart 1977). Protestants organized themselves in the Orange Order and in the Ulster Unionism Council (UUC), founded in 1904-1905. The UUC became the main

organizing body for the various Protestants-Union groups in northern Ireland. “Unionism” was born (Fitzsimmons 1993:33). Later in 1905, Arthur Griffith started a new political party, intended to represent Irish Nationalist voters. The party was named Sinn Féin (which roughly translates from the Irish as “We Ourselves”). But the party attracted little attention or support for almost a dozen years (Fitzsimmons 1993).

Prime Minister Henry H. Asquith introduced the third Home Rule Bill in April 1912. By this time the situation had changed in one very important way: The Parliament Act of 1911 had cut down the veto of the House of Lords to three successive governments, and the Home Rule Bill was for that reason certain to become law. It remained to be seen whether the Unionists would refuse to go along with the bill. The answer was quickly visible (Stewart 1977).

### **3.4. *The Birth of Northern Ireland***

Half a million Protestants signed an Ulster Covenant in 1912 pledging them to refuse to go along with Home Rule by “all means which may be found necessary” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:3; Stewart 1977). The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was formed in 1913. This citizen army was very well organized and ready to take over the policing and defence of the whole Province of Ulster. The army counted almost 100,000 men. They set up Provisional Ulster Government ready to take control of the province should Home Rule be applied (Stewart 1977). In November 1913 Nationalists in the south responded to the Unionist’s paramilitary organization by starting to assemble their own “Irish Volunteers.” During six months, about 75,000 men had joined the Irish Volunteers; within a year of its formation, there were 180,000 members (Fitzsimmons 1993).

However, the “Curragh Mutiny” drama played out during March 1914 ensured that the Provisional Ulster Government would not take control of the province. This mutiny started when a majority among the British officers stationed at the principal Irish base, the Curragh Camp in County Kildare, announced that they did not wish to take part in forcing Home Rule on their fellow Conservatives in the north. Neither enforced resignations nor courts martial did confront them. Their leader went to London and returned with a document from the War Office where the last paragraph was written in his own handwriting, saying: “I understand the last paragraph to

mean the Troops under our command will not be called upon to enforce Home Rule and we can so assure our officers” (Coogan 1995). A month later, on 24 April, what this assurance meant in practice was spelled out. This day police and customs officials stood absent-mindedly by as the UVF illegally landed 26,000 rifles and 3 million rounds of ammunition from Germany at separate locations; Larne, Bagnor and Donaghdee and other ports in eastern Ulster (Coogan 1995; McKittrick and McVea 2000; Stewart 1977). Whoever was going to enforce Home Rule, it would not be the British Army (Coogan 1995). The “Curragh Incident” further strengthened UVF’s positions and weakened Asquith’s (Stewart 1977). At the end of May 1914 the third Home Rule Bill cleared its final legislative hurdle (Fitzsimmons 1993).

Though the crisis thus appeared to pass without any result, it had lead to the formula which the British would later use in what for many years appeared to be a successful effort to get to the bottom of the Irish question: partition. The British government hoped for a speedy, peaceful resolution of that developing political conflict and on 21 July 1914 there was arranged a private meeting of Ireland’s major leaders. The meeting ended without agreement, but there was substantial movement on both sides. Andrew Bonar Law formally proposed partition at the meeting (Coogan 1995), but already in 1913 he had written to Sir Edward Carson: “I have long felt that if it were possible to leave Ulster as she is, and have some form of Home Rule for the rest of Ireland that is, on the whole, the only way out” (Law cited in Stewart 1977:169). Bonar Law that proposed what came to take place a half-dozen year later: lasting partition of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Derry/Londonderry,<sup>27</sup> Fermanagh, and Tyrone from Ireland’s other twenty-six counties. Under this final plan, Protestant Unionists in the north would outnumber Catholic Nationalists by about a two-to-one ration, though Counties Fermanagh and Tyrone had a Catholic majority (Fitzsimmons 1993). Both Carson and John Redmond opposed partition. Carson and the Unionists gave up the idea that they could save all of Ireland from Home Rule. Carson suggested instead the complete and permanent exclusion from Irish Home Rule of all nine counties of Ulster, in which there was at that time a relatively slight Protestant majority. Redmond, on the

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<sup>27</sup> When James I began the plantation of Ulster, with the “shiring” of the province, he created new counties, among others Coleraine, which was shortly thereafter named Londonderry. In recognition of the city of London’s substantial investment in this area, that city’s name was prefixed to the original Irish name of the city, Derry. “Londonderry” became as well the name of the county as a whole (Fitzsimmons 1993:14). Even today, that Ulster city’s and county’s appellation can be evocative: Irish Nationalists invariably use “Derry; Northern Ireland’s Unionists,

other hand saw that the Ulster Unionists were politically and military strong. They could manage to separate some part of northeastern Ireland from a Dublin-based Home Rule government. He suggested instead that Ulster's nine counties each be given a choice of Home Rule or not. A poll like that would almost undoubtedly have resulted in a four-counties Northern Ireland. Redmond hoped such exclusion would only be temporary (Fitzsimmons 1993).

All attempts to negotiate and compromise failed. Only the outbreak of the First World War prevented a civil war in Ireland and possibly also in Britain (Stewart 1977). On 18 September 1914, Asquith sidelined the Home Rule issue by formally introducing Home Rule to law but he accompanied the measure by an Amending Bill, which suspended its operation until after the war. But the IRB leadership decided that the Great War offered an ideal opportunity to implement Wolfe Tone's teaching about taking advantage of England's difficulties. The leaders of Clann Na Gael in New York and the German Foreign Service supported the IRB leadership (Coogan 1995). This small number of republicans paved the way for an armed rebellion against British rule (McKittrick and McVea 2000). They had a different goal than to wait for the Home Rule issue to be taken up again. They were interested mainly in making a "blood sacrifice." They wanted to organize a rebellion to revitalize the Irish Nationalism, "which, they felt, the four-decade exercise in seeking Home Rule had wrongfully repressed (Fitzsimmons 1993:39). 1916 saw the Easter Rising in Dublin, with a small number of republicans staging an armed rebellion against British rule (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Roughly twelve hundred rebels went out to fight (Fitzsimmons 1993:40).<sup>28</sup> The rising itself was quickly put down, but the action of the British government bounced back: London was considered to have gone too far when the British executed sixteen of the Volunteers leaders, including James Connolly and Padraig Pearse. A huge swell of sympathy for the republicans followed (Coogan 1995; McKittrick and McVea 2000).

When World War One ended in 1918, the Irish wish for Home Rule was swept away and became into the demand for an independent Irish republic. The newly formed Irish Republican Army, known as the IRA, began a violent campaign against Britain. This campaign is today referred to

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"Londonderry." The former name is generally favoured in colloquial speech, but the latter remains the official name of the city and the county (Fitzsimmons 1993:14, footnote 1). I use the connotation Derry/Londonderry.

<sup>28</sup> Coogan (1995:19) asserts there were six hundred Volunteers out to fight.

in the south as the War of Independence.<sup>29</sup> Westminster passed the Government of Ireland Act after long lasting talks in 1920 in an effort to please the conflicting demands of the two traditions. In essence Government of Ireland Act “hoped to solve the problem by keeping all of Ireland in British hands while providing for a Home Rule parliament in the twenty-six north-eastern counties” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:4). In addition to have its own parliament, Northern Ireland would continue to send MPs (Member of Parliament) to Westminster. Aware of the rising Nationalist wave, Ulster Unionists unwillingly agreed to this and Northern Ireland came into existence. Irish Nationalists rejected the plan and their war for independence lasted until a treaty in 1921 created a twenty-six-county Irish Free State (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Northern Ireland has been created through demographic compromise. It was essentially the largest area that could be comfortably held with a majority in favour of the union with Britain. The new arrangements established a bicameral legislature, and a subordinate government in Belfast with authority over a number of devolved powers, including policing, education, local government and social services. London retained the ultimate authority (Darby 1995).

### **3.5. *Northern Ireland 1921-1960s***

#### **3.5.1. Communal Violence**

Northern Ireland was born between 1921 and 1925, when the report of the Boundary Commission left the border without changing it (Bew et.al. 1995). The birth of Northern Ireland was a bloody one; there was widespread communal violence and 557 people were killed between July 1920 and July 1922. In the same period the IRA had considerable activity (Hennessey 1997) and Ulster Unionists were angered by what they regarded as “deliberate campaign of secretarian assassination by the IRA in Southern Ireland. These campaigns were directed against Protestants as well as against members of the Crown forces in the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and the British army, which was regarded as “their” [Unionists] loyal security forces” (Hennessey 1997:11).

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<sup>29</sup> Another name is Anglo-Irish War (Hennessey 1997:11).

“During the War of Independence in the south, the IRA carried out a campaign of ambushing and raiding police barracks, inflicting casualties that were estimated, between 1919 and 1921, at 600 killed and 1,200 wounded on the side of the Crown forces. On the side of the Nationalists 752 IRA men were killed and 866 wounded” (Hennessey 1997).

Ulster Unionists witnessed the violence in the South, and the spreading to Northern Ireland, as evidence of what they could expect in a united Ireland. The first intercommunal violence had flared in Derry/Londonderry in April 1920. When 1,500 British troops arrived, on 23 June 1920, eight Catholics and four Protestants had been killed. As the violence continued, in August 1920, the Belfast Boycott Committee was formed. This committee appealed to Dáil Éirann<sup>30</sup> to boycott Belfast goods and banks in reprisal for the “war of extermination being waged against us” (Hennessey 1997:14). Members from Sinn Féin, the IRA and a bishop took the initiative to form this committee. After fresh occurrence of violence, and given the existence of “a feeling of insecurity” in Belfast “due to the recent developments of Sinn Féin activity” the Unionist side became convinced that an armed force of special constables should be established immediately (Hennessey 1997:15). By October 1920 the details of Ulster Special Constabulary (USC) were published. This constabulary was also known later as the “B-specials,” a heavily armed auxiliary force (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The force was based mainly on a reorganizing of the UVF and was therefore almost absolutely Protestant (Hennessey 1997), although it gave the feeling for a brief second that the new police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) might become religiously integrated. But the force remained more than 90 % Protestant the whole time of its history (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Well over 30,000 full and part time members was made an official part of the Northern Ireland security forces (Fitzsimmons 1993).

The RUC was to become a representation of repression for many Catholics, with its widespread allegations that its members were involved in the murdering of Catholic civilians. From the Protestant viewpoint the RUC were seen as defenders against an IRA terror campaign. When the IRA killed policemen it was not seen as the death of a member of the Crown forces but as the killing of another Protestant or loyalist (Hennessey 1997).

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<sup>30</sup> Dáil Éirann is the name of the Assembly of Ireland (Fitzsimmons 1993:42).

### 3.5.2. The Catholic Minority

Catholics and Nationalists were without a doubt considered as second-class citizens, and as essentially dangerous to the state. They were regarded as being less deserving of houses and jobs than their Protestant neighbours were. The representatives of Catholics and Nationalists were effectively banned from political power or influence (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Roughly, the Catholics complaint fell into two main categories. Firstly, they claimed to be discriminated in the public service, in education, in housing, and in employment. They argued that Unionists had preserved their political dominance by the gerrymandering<sup>31</sup> of electoral boundaries, most especially in Derry/Londonderry. Second, they complained of direct repression by the apparatus of the state, in particular by the use of the special powers against republicans (Coogan 1995; Steward 1977).

The Unionist party's leaders supposed that the new state could only continue to exist if the power were securely in loyal Protestant hands. This was obvious from the start of the new state. The first the Unionists did after been put in charge by Westminster, were to make sure that their power should be both undiluted and enduring.

“...It was institutionalised partiality, and there was no means of redress for Catholic grievances, no avenue of appeal against either real or imagined discrimination. Freed from any effective oversight the Unionist machine was able to function without any checks or balances or mechanisms which might have curbed excesses” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:17).

As a result, one of the new government's earliest acts was to set about changing the voting system and local council boundaries. Since the seventy-three local authorities were significant as sources of power and support in areas such as housing and education this was a key measure. In the first council elections after break up in 1920, the Unionist party won control over around two-third of the councils (McKittrick and McVea 2000). At the first election to the new Northern Ireland Parliament,<sup>32</sup> Carson refused the offer to become Northern Ireland's first Prime Minister,

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<sup>31</sup> Gerrymandering is drawing of district boundaries so as to favour one's own chances in future elections. In 1812 Governor Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts drew boundaries for electoral districts in the state so as to maximize the chance of his party winning seats (Oxford Dictionary of Politics 1996:204).

<sup>32</sup> The parliament is called Stormont, located in Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland.



with the privilege falling to Sir James Craig.<sup>33</sup> Craig looked on the Northern Ireland election with the single great issue: “Who is for the Empire and who is for a Republic?” (Hennessey 1997:15). A number of the councils in Nationalist hands were troublesome and a number of western councils had symbolically voted to break away from Northern Ireland and link up with the south, while others refused to acknowledge the authority of the new government. Craig replied to the troublesome councils by adjusting the voting system and later changing boundaries so that Unionists could deal with such rebellious councils by simply taking control of them (McKittrick and McVea 2000; Cochrane 1999).

In 1922 proportional representation (PR (STV) voting system was ended (McKittrick and McVea 2000). This elimination was by no means just a technical adjustment. PR (STV) had been built in both as a protection for Catholic and Protestant minorities in the two parts of Ireland and also as symbol of respect for their views. The new system introduced was of huge advantage to the Unionist party. The system introduced was the “first-past-the-post”-system, together with the extremely partisan transforming of local government boundaries. The Nationalists lost their majorities in thirteen of twenty-four councils they had originally controlled as a result of the changes (McKittrick and McVea 2000).<sup>34</sup> Even though Northern Ireland’s second city, Derry/Londonderry had a clear Nationalist majority (Cochrane 1999) the city moved from Nationalist to Unionist control (McKittrick and McVea 2000). When local Unionist party leaders worried about that they might lose control of the city, one more change was worked out. One of Craig’s cabinet ministers sent a letter to him: “Unless something is done now, it is only a matter of time until Derry passes into the hands of the Nationalists and Sinn Féin parties for all the time. On the other hand, if proper steps are taken now, I believe Derry can be saved for years to come” (cited from McKittrick and McVea 2000:8). The government did take such steps, in the form of a new arrangement calculated to guarantee that around 7,500 Unionist voters returned twelve

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<sup>33</sup> Sir James Craig is also known as Lord Craigavon (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson 1995:249).

<sup>34</sup> How PR (STV) works: Upon entering a polling station, voters are given the ballot paper that lists the candidates in alphabetical order and bears the instruction: “Write 1 beside the name of the candidate of your first choice, 2 beside your second choice, and so on.” PR (STV) is easily understood in the sense that the voter needs to understand it, and this does not include knowing what happens to a No. 3 preference (Sinnott 1993:69). The logic of PR (STV) is that it ensures proportionality by (a) lowering the cost of a seat by reducing the size of quota that obtains in a single-seat contest (50 percent + 1) by the addition of extra seats per constituency, by (b) eliciting and using extra information on the voter’s choice, i.e. his or her order of preferences among the competing candidates, and by (c) using this information not just in a process of elimination of the lowest candidates but also in dealing with the problem of what

councillors while 10,000 Nationalist voters returned only eight. Nationalists labeled this boundary manipulation as “gerrymandering” (McKittrick and McVea 2000; Mitchell and Gillespie 1999; Stewart 1977).

The ending of PR (STV) in local government was so successful in increasing the Unionist party’s power that Craig did the same thing for the Belfast parliament in the late 1920s. Constituency boundaries were redrawn and PR (STV) was dropped. In Craig’s terms the ending of PR (STV) in elections to parliament worked brilliantly; his party won thirty-seven of the fifty-two seats in the 1929 election. The entire 1933 general election became a formality as twenty-seven seats were uncontested by non-Unionists. As a consequence the Unionist party won the election before anyone had voted. Northern Ireland’s demographic make-up and the governing set-up and other factors left the Unionists in permanent control of power. All this was regarded as extremely undemocratic from the Nationalists point of view. The only element with the power to intervene was Westminster itself. Westminster had set down in section 75 of GIA that it retained the highest authority over Northern Ireland matters. But the British ministers backed down when Craig and his ministers threatened to resign when the British government asked Craig not to fulfill abolition of PR (STV) in local government. This showed that Westminster conceded that Unionism was effectively in charge. Nationalists and others who traveled to London to protest about practices in Belfast started to hear an answer that would become well known over the decades: such things were a matter for the Belfast parliament itself, which was the correct location to raise them (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

In relation to jobs, the RUC security forces made jobs available for Protestants and kept up law and order. This was only one of many points of Protestant advantage. The civil service was predominantly Protestant, with maybe 10 % Catholic representation in its lower ranks. A 1943 survey confirmed that there were no Catholics in the 55 most senior jobs, with only 37 Catholics in the 600 middle-ranking posts (McKittrick and McVea 2000:11). In most local authorities and other parts of the public sector, the picture was similar with only sporadic exceptions: “There were no Catholics among the cabinet, the senior staff in the Stormont Commons, the top ranks of the RUC, the Civil Service Commission, and other important jobs” (ibid). While Catholics tended

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would otherwise be the wasted votes of a portion of the voters who supported candidates who have exceeded the

to predominate in some lower-status occupations, such as the drink trade, Protestants dominated the private sector: many large firms, and indeed whole industries, commonly had workforces that were more than 90 % Protestant. Shipyards and heavy engineering concerns, “the jewels in the Northern Ireland’s industrial crown” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:12), employed few Catholics. At times of high tension there were periodic clean-outs in which Catholic workers were expelled by force from some of the big companies. Not surprisingly, Catholics being without a job was generally more than double Protestant unemployment, in part because of these patterns and partly because a higher proportion of Catholics lived in areas of high unemployment such as the west. It seems likely that practices such as recruitment of staff by word of mouth or on the recommendation of a friend or a relative contributed to part of this picture. Generally this meant the sign up of another Protestant since most employers, particularly those working in large companies, were Protestant. Such practices played a part in keeping up employment gap, though seeming to be the natural run of thing in the eyes of those who gained from them (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

For the most part in Belfast, there had always been a large amount of segregation between Catholics and Protestants, and the Stormont system helped make sure that such pattern would go on (Fitzsimmons 1993; McKittrick and McVea 2000). Northern Ireland had, economically, some relatively good years after the Second World War. When these came to an end, the Province faced again the decades-old problem of decline of the traditional industries: shipbuilding, linen production, and agriculture. As a result, emigration from Northern Ireland was high. Because Catholic unemployment was at a higher level and because many of the better jobs were reserved for Protestants, the Catholic emigration rate was higher than that of the Protestants. Well over half of those leaving the North were Catholics (Fitzsimmons 1993). Emigration rose from an estimated 187,000 in the decade 1936-1946, to 197,000 in the first half of the 1950s and 212,000 in the second. By 1961 the population had fallen to 2,8 million (Townshend 1998). Immediately after the partition of Ireland, Catholics made up 34 percent of the population in the north and Protestants 65 percent and for many years a higher Catholic birthrate was balanced by a higher emigration rate among Catholics. As a result, the relative proportions changed little (Morrow 1995).

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quota (Sinnott 1993:71).

Another area that produced much Catholics grievance, especially after World War Two, was housing (Cochrane 1999). Housing was mainly in the hands of local councils, and while many types of council operated in a non-controversial manner, in others policy was distorted for political ends. Because voting in local government elections was limited to ratepayers<sup>35</sup> and their spouses, a new house would often carry two votes, a matter that could be of great political significance in areas where the Unionist and Nationalist votes were evenly balanced. The most frequent criticisms were of councils in the western counties where battles for control were the hardest fought. In local government the electorate was a full one-quarter smaller than that for the Belfast parliament and therefore each vote had an extra significance. Subtenants, lodgers, and anyone living at home with their parents could not vote because of the vote restrictions. These restrictions affected the poorer sections of the population, and these sections were later to present one of the most potent slogans for the civil rights movement with its demand for “one man – one vote.” Ironically, the increase of house building after 1945 sharpened the potential for disputes by granting local councils with many more houses to allocate. This was a heavily politicized activity: in some cases individual houses were assigned at council meetings; though more often distributions were decided by small groups of councillors on housing committees (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Regarding education, one laudable and noteworthy step done by the first Unionists government was its sponsorship of the Education Act of 1923. Through that Act, the government tried to establish a non-sectarian, publicly operated elementary school system. But, in fact neither Protestants nor Catholics or the Orange Order supported this (Fitzsimmons 1993). None of the parts preferred religious mixing in schools. Under this pressure the government, as an alternative, applied in following years a scheme for financing education in Ulster. This gave some support even to completely independent schools, but it granted extra support to other schools in proportion to the amount of control over them that their administrators transferred to the state. In fact this meant that the Catholic schools, attended by more or less Catholic children, received the smallest amount of government aid (Fitzsimmons 1993). When UK introduced education reforms in the late 1940s, third level education came within the grasp of working-class students, both

Catholic and Protestant. This had not happened until this reform came along (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The IRA existed throughout Northern Ireland's history, although it was tiny and weak before its rapid expansion in the early 1970s.<sup>36</sup> The system dealt with the IRA's sporadic campaigns without trouble: the IRA's most determined attempt, in the 1950s, was crushed by the use of internment without trial on both sides of the border, and faded out. While internment and other security methods were the immediate reasons of the IRA's periodic defeats, a much more telling factor lay in the judgment of the Catholic population as a whole that IRA's violence was of no use (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Though most Catholics held the hope to one day see a united Ireland, this did not widen the enthusiasm for the bombs and the bullets. A major 1960s opinion poll found, in fact, that more Protestants than Catholics revealed they were ready to close their eyes to violence in support of political ends. Most Nationalists appear to be share the evaluation of the IRA done by the New York Times following the fizzling out of the 1950s campaign: "The IRA belongs to history, and it belongs to better men in times that are gone. So does the Sinn Féin. Let us put a wreath of red roses on their grave and move on" (cited in McKittrick and McVea 2000:19).

The record of the Unionist government, chiefly in its early decades, contains many instances of senior government ministers not only overlooking such practices in jobs, housing, political power etc. but also approving of them. In reply to critique of the Orange Order, Craig set the tone when he told the Belfast parliament: "I have always said I am an Orangeman first and a politician and member of this parliament afterwards. All I boast is that we are a Protestant parliament and a Protestant state." Down the years this, slightly misquoted, entered political folklore as "a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:13). Most Catholic representatives resorted to the politics of bitter but unsuccessful criticism in these situations and many stayed away from Stormont for long periods of time (Fitzsimmons 1993).

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<sup>35</sup> It has been difficult to find a definition of this concept. Lijphart says restricted franchise was dependent on criteria of property (Lijphart 1975:94). I choose to use this criterion as a definition of who was entitled to vote.

<sup>36</sup> About the split of IRA into Provisional IRA (PIRA) and Official IRA (OIRA), see section 4.8.2.

### **3.5.3. The Orange Order**

The Orange Order, established in 1795<sup>37</sup> by Protestant farmers and weavers in County Armagh, developed into a powerful force within Irish Protestantism, north and south, during the nineteenth century (Patterson 1996).

The Orange Order culture was separatist and anti-ecumenical. The Orders' members was pledged to "resist the ascendancy of that church" by all lawful means. They were also warned not to attend "any act or ceremony of Popish worship" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:14). Orange lodges provided the framework for the UVF, and from the start Northern Ireland took on a distinctively Orange complexion. Within the RUC an Orange lodge was founded, and Orange men made up the bulk for the B-Specials, who in some areas had their headquarters in Orange halls (McKittrick and McVea 2000). For the Order's largely aristocratic and gentry leadership, it was a mean of mobilizing the lower classes Protestants for the defence of the institutions of state, the established Church of Ireland and landed property. Its peasant and working-class mass membership saw it as a mean of ensuring recognition by the Protestant elite of their "rights." These included preferential treatment in employment over Nationalists and other "disloyal elements" (Patterson 1996). For the Unionists, the first imperative was to achieve and to maintain, as far as possible, Unionist unity. Only on the basis of effective Unionist solidarity could Nationalist "conspiracy" to subvert the status quo be confronted. This was the task of the UUP, which governed Northern Ireland from 1921 to 1972. Unity was, among other factors, secured within the structure of the party's own organization by its association with all bodies of Unionist opinion, particularly with the Orange Order. These associations ensured a popular base for the Unionist politics, a well-organized structure and a cross-class alliance of interests (Aughey 1996).

Politically the Order turned into a central part of Northern Ireland. From 1921 to 1969 only three of fifty-four Unionists cabinet ministers were not members of the Order (Cochrane 1999). Eighty-seven of the ninety-five Unionist backbenchers during the same period were members of

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<sup>37</sup> About the foundation of the Orange Order, see section 3.3.

the Orange Order. The Order was institutionally linked to the Unionist party, occupying a considerable percentage of the seats on the Ulster Unionist Council (UUC), the party's ruling body. Many Unionist party meetings were held in Orange halls with ministers using the Orange platforms to deliver important speeches (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Two senior Methodists described the power of the Order during the years 1921-1969, as "Membership was an indispensable condition of political advancement. It protected the employment of Protestants by its influence over employers, which is a polite way of saying that it contrived systematic discrimination against Catholics. Local authorities were dominated by members of the local lodges" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:14).

Catholics complained of Protestant clerical intervention in politics, particularly with reference to the Orange Order. On Orange platforms, Government ministers and clergy mingled a religious and political appeal, emphasizing that the maintenance of the Union with Britain was essential if Protestant and religious in Ireland were to be safeguarded. For Catholics, the Orange Order parade was a demonstration of control of territory, a demonstration of Protestant power, and a proof that nothing had changed in almost three hundred years since the Battle of Boyne in 1690 (Hennessey 1997). Orange marches became part of the structure of Unionist government while at the same time Nationalist parades were subject to severe restriction. The Twelfth of July celebrations was the climax of the Orange marching season and this effectively became a ritual in Northern Ireland (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Catholics considered this Protestant organization as intolerant and anti-Catholic, but most Protestants saw the order as a significant guardian of their heritage. The Unionist community consisted of people who were widely different in terms of class, outlook and geography. Whereas Catholics had no more than one church, Protestants were split into dozens of churches, large and small, from high-church Anglicans to Presbyterians with a history of independence and dissent. The Orange Order presented the political cement to stick them all together (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The Catholic Church has long been the largest and most publicly prominent institution within the Nationalist community. The church was the one established institution able to represent Catholic views to the British authorities and it was also able to organize key parts of

social life. This is one of the most important differences between the two politically divided groups (Morrow 1996).

In the nineteenth century the Orange Order's march season has given rise to recurring riots, particularly in Belfast and one official report said, "The celebration of that [Orange July] festival is plainly and unmistakably the originating cause of these riots." The report added that the occasion was used "to remain one party of triumph of their ancestors over those of the other, and to inculcate the feelings of Protestant superiority over their Roman Catholic neighbours" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:14). Its annual Twelfth of July celebrations recall the victory of the Protestant King William III over the Catholic King James II at the Battle of Boyne in 1690 as the point where religious and civil liberty was guaranteed under the British constitution. The effective founding of the Unionist Party was a meeting of seven Orangemen who were MPs at Westminster in 1886 (Hennessey 1997). On 12 July 1935 the Orange Parade was fired on near Belfast City center, triggering off the worst wave of sectarian rioting the city had seen since 1920-22. Rioting continued on and off for three weeks, during which thirteen people were killed, scores were injured, and hundreds of families – mainly Catholics – were driven from their homes. Sir Richard Dawson Bates originally banned the Parade, but he cancelled the ban under pressure from the Orange Order (Hennessey 1997).

Seen from an Irish Nationalist perspective Northern Ireland was an "Orange State." There was no mystery about the nature and the functioning of Northern Ireland. There was an organic link, from Northern Ireland's development of a province-wide institutional form in 1905, between Ulster Unionism and the Orange Order.



### 3.5.4. Political Stagnation

In both communities, social exclusion went hand in hand with political stagnation. The Stormont system was characterized by unopposed elections. Because elections were more or less decided on a religious headcount, the side which was in the minority in a constituency often simply gave up trying to get a candidate in there. In the South Antrim district, for example, the Unionist majority was so secure that for nine consecutive elections no Nationalist went forward, a Unionist candidate being returned unopposed each time. This meant in South Antrim, no polling took place for Stormont elections between 1929 and 1965 (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The stability was underlined by the amazing long terms of Unionist Prime Ministers. The first, Sir James Craig, held the post from 1921 until his death in 1940. Even though the second, John Miller Andrews, stayed only three years (1940-1943), the third, Sir Basil Brooke,<sup>38</sup> continued for twenty years (1943-1963). Those who served in their cabinets also tended to have a long political life span: by 1939 not only Craig, but also four of his seven ministers, had been in the cabinet for eighteen years. Nor was this an era for young men: Craig was sixty-nine years old when he left office, Andrews seventy-two and Brooke seventy-four years old (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The fact that Northern Ireland was involved in the war effort in 1939-1945 while the south continued to not take side meant that the Unionism's stock increased in London while sympathy for the Nationalist cause declined. This was convenient to the Unionist party as a post-war British Labour government was elected and in 1948 when the Dublin government without warning proclaimed that Ireland, though effectively sovereign for many years, was officially announce a republic and leaving the Commonwealth (see footnote 8). The Labour government was of the opinion that it needed new legislation to regularize Northern Ireland's position. The government, headed by Clement Attlee, made the addition of a section in the New Ireland Bill declaring that Northern Ireland would remain in the UK so long as a majority in the Stormont parliament in Belfast wanted it. Given Stormont's inbuilt Unionist majority, Nationalists stated that the section secured the separation of Ireland (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

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<sup>38</sup> Sir Basil Brooke was created Lord Brookeborough and Viscount Brookeborough in 1952 (Hennessey 1997, Kennedy-Pipe 1997, McKittrick and McVea 2000; Wichert 1991).

Against this background, the cabinet took a critical look at Northern Ireland and made some important political judgments. The first of these had to do with the reality of Protestant power, with ministers looking back to the 1914 period and the UVF gunrunning. The 1949 cabinet minutes record Labour's conclusion: "Unless the people of Northern Ireland felt reasonably assured of the support of the people of this country, there might be a revival of the Ulster Volunteers and of other bodies intending to meet any threat of force by force; and this would bring nearer the danger of an outbreak of violence in Ireland" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:23-24). The next issue was closer to home: the UK's wider strategic defence considerations. The south's leaving from the Commonwealth meant that keeping Northern Ireland in the bounds of the UK had become a matter of first-class strategic importance to this state. The subject was so crucial said Lord Normanbrook, that even if Northern Ireland wanted to leave the UK it was doubtful that any British government could accept Northern Ireland to do so (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Although there were major economic changes over the decades, the basic elements of Unionist dominance, Catholic powerlessness and Westminster disregard were relatively unaffected even by an event as cataclysmic as World War Two. There was one episode, which was capable of shaking Northern Ireland to its political foundations, but because the episode took place in private, it had insignificant consequences on public opinion. The episode happened in 1940 when the Churchill government made contact with the Dublin Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Eamon de Valera, with a proposed to look at the option of declaring in favour of Irish unity in return for Irish wartime assistance. The Unionist government was shocked and angry, but the initiative came to nothing. Wartime secrecy kept the episode from the public, but it helped strengthen in Stormont ministers the perception that Britain always meant more to Northern Ireland than Northern Ireland meant to Britain (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The 1940s and 1950s came and went, with not even the war changing the condition of Northern Ireland political life, and with the Unionist system as strong as ever. After World War One Winston Churchill has written about the long life of the Irish question:

“Then came the Great War. Every institution, almost, in the world was strained. Great empires have been overturned. The whole map of Europe has been changed. The position of countries has been violently altered. The modes of thought of men, the whole outlook on affairs, the grouping of parties, all have encountered violent and tremendous change in the deluge of the world. But as the deluge subsides and the waters fall short we see the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone emerging once and again. The integrity of their quarrel is one of the few institutions that have been unaltered in the cataclysm which has swept the world” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:25).

During World War Two Churchill’s own proposal on Irish unity could have changed the course of Irish history. Not until the 1960s would the Northern Ireland system first begin to tremble, disintegrate, and there after descend into violence (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

## 4. The Troubles

### 4.1. *O'Neill's Years*

As far as the British were concerned, by the early 1960s Ireland land was not a problem, and the Government in London was not really occupied with the affairs of the Province or involved in the activities of the Northern Irish Government (Kennedy-Pipe 1997). On the facade it was given the impression of reasonably calm when O'Neill took charge of Northern Ireland (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The period between 1963 and 1969 are often identify as “The O'Neill Era.” The Stormont Prime Minister of that time, Captain Terence O'Neill,<sup>39</sup> represented a remarkable difference from tradition. He was striking both in the personality and approach. Already from the start there was a sense of generational change as O'Neill was appointed as Prime Minister on 24 March 1963 after Prime Minister Brooke's resignation (Wichert 1991). Brooke had been in offices for two whole decades but it is O'Neill's six-year term that stands for a turning point in Northern Ireland's history. From the start of his premiership O'Neill said he would be in “the business of making changes and of producing bold and imaginative measures” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:27). O'Neill tried to change the foundation on which both society and industry operated in Northern Ireland (Kennedy-Pipe 1997). He asserted that Northern Ireland could be reformed and modernized without risking either the Union with Britain or his own party's non-stop run in the government (McKittrick and McVea 2000). He was the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland who wished that all the inhabitants of the province should benefit from modernization (Wichert 1991).

The O'Neill government started to build up new connections with the trade union movement and to catch the attention of new investment from abroad to replace the poorly existing industries. Such moves were in the beginning general uncontroversial. But by his new stress on improving community relations there were created a lot disputation. He turned out to be the first Unionist

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<sup>39</sup> He was created Lord O'Neill of the Maine in 1970 (Wichert 1991:85).

Prime Minister to pay regular trips to Catholic schools and to offer handshakes to nuns. Northern Ireland was unused to all this. Northern Ireland's first three Prime Ministers had been men of the opinion who characterized Nationalists, and indeed Catholics on the whole, as being totally unacceptable. O'Neill, only the fourth Prime Minister in more than forty years, was an enthusiastic promoter of reform, not only open to change (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

O'Neill aimed for a better-planned economy (Hennessey 1997). Experts had asserted that much of the industry in Northern Ireland was out of date and that the whole economic infrastructure required upgrading. O'Neill had practical reasons for pursuing modernization too: unemployment in Northern Ireland had increased rather significantly; therefore it was under O'Neill that economic planning began to be taken seriously (Kennedy-Pipe 1997). The economic situation of the nineteen-sixties was encouraging for economic modernization. By the time Brooke resigned, unemployment stood at 10 percent (Hennessey 1997; Wichert 1991). The unemployment rate increased up to levels generally double of the UK average because of steep decline in traditional industries such as shipbuilding and linen. O'Neill started to deal with a strategy to change the economy. He agreed to ideas as the construction of a new town, a second university and a new housing programme. With the establishing of big names as Grundig, Goodyear and Michelin, O'Neill's major drive to attract outside industry by improving the infrastructure and offering generous financial incentives worked to some extent. However unemployment kept on being high in a number of districts as the creation of new jobs hardly kept up with the loss of jobs from the older industries (McKittrick and McVea 2000). As McKittrick and McVea (2000:28) put it: "It is scarcely a coincidence that some of the areas which were to feature prominently in the troubles, such as north and west Belfast and Londonderry city, were among those where poor housing and high employment persisted."

O'Neill's economic difficulties were accompanied by political problems. O'Neill thought that the economic benefits of the Union could be used to incorporate Catholics into the Northern Ireland state. He rejected blames of "apartheid" in Northern Ireland: where "apartheid" existed, O'Neill argued that it was almost a consequence of entirely voluntary separation from the mainstream of public and social life. He also had doubts whether the people from both North and South of Ireland really dwelled on over the events of 1690 and 1798. Instead he believed that people paid

more attention about their lives of today: the value of their take-home pay, job security, and their children's education. He regarded the terms "Catholic" and "Protestant" as beside the point in a modern government. But all over, O'Neill's primary loyalty was to Britain and the British state (Hennessey 1997).

The sharp drop in economic activity and increasing unemployment towards the end of the 1950s coincided with the emergence of the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP). The NILP was a new political challenge for O'Neill. The party was a left-leaning party that supported the Union with Britain and attracted largely Protestant backing. But the NILP had both Protestants and Catholics in its ranks. Two times the NILP won four of Stormont's fifty-two seats, thereby winning 26 percent of the total vote in the 1962 general election and O'Neill got worried that Protestant support might drain away to the NILP. Next, the flow in support for the NILP increased immediately ahead when Labour came to power in Britain. The NILP had very appropriate and powerful friends across the Irish Sea when Harold Wilson became Prime Minister in 1964. For Unionism, this dangerous coincidence meant it made even more political sense for O'Neill to lay emphasis on industrial modernization and religious bridge building because Wilson was anti-Unionist and was not approving the Stormont regime. Following this, O'Neill was the first Unionist Prime Minister to be in front of a British counterpart unfriendly to his government (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

On this background it was very desirable to, for a lot of arguments, to launch Northern Ireland as up to date state, at ease with itself and with its neighbours. The NILP was to be warded off, Wilson should be convinced that both Northern Ireland's economy and its politics were being restructured in a progressive manner, and last, investors should be presented a desirable investment suggestion. O'Neill was the first Unionist leader that was aware of public relations and the significance of image. From the start he set out with the aim that attracting new investment meant working to avoid any aspect of instability and of unsettled antique quarrels. As part of his campaign he turned south, with an initiative intended to end the long cold war between Belfast and Dublin. Across the border to the South, a similar economic evolution was taking place. Seán Lemass was getting rid of the intolerant, protectionist economies of his forerunner de Valera. So cold had the relations between North and South been that Prime Ministers of the two

states had not met ever since the 1920s. Between the two governments there were virtually no co-ordination either (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The effort to appeal to new investment in the 1960s led Lemass and O'Neill to think of normalizing the affairs. This resulted in O'Neill taking the initiative for which he is best recalled. In 1965 he invited Lemass to Belfast (Kennedy-Pipe 1997). The visit was arranged without prior cabinet approval and served an economic as well as political purpose (Wichert 1991). Previous to this no Taoiseach had ever made the journey to Stormont; therefore the visit was a political sensation. For both men the visit was also a gamble, though many people north and south felt that normalizing the relations should be added to the other 1960s innovations (Kennedy-Pipe 1997). The visit shocked many of O'Neill's supporters (Hennessey 1997). Most of the Unionists supported the visit, though the Reverend Ian Richard Kyle Paisley staged complaints and some Unionist ministers grumbled that they had known of the visit only after Lemass in fact was at Stormont. The stay had taken place in strict confidentiality. But on the whole the initiative was seen as a great success. O'Neill followed it up by visiting Dublin two times. Even the staid Nationalist party was moved into unexpected action agreeing at Lemass's urging to assume the role of official Stormont resistance. This was seen as significant political melting (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

O'Neill's rhetorical tone was remarkable and even visionary: he appealed for "a new pride in the province" and for "all sections of the community to feel committed to the task" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:30) He thought it was fundamental "to convince more and more people that the government is working for the good of all and not only those who vote Unionist" (ibid). This was a stirring rhetoric, even in the change with the expansive modernizing mood of the impressive 1960s. The Unionist party did well in the 1965 general election, and the opinion polls of the time indicated a high degree of Protestant support for such initiatives (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Within the Catholic community, during the O'Neill era, liberalizing developments also seemed to be developing. A much-strengthened Catholic middle class was created by the mid-sixties through openings made for Catholics in the nineteen fifties. Openings like the influence of the Education Act from 1944, and economic diversification. This new middle class looked away from the long-established role of serving his or her own community. The new Catholic graduates went for the most part into teaching and the medical and legal professions, since Protestants

dominated the public service. The new Catholic middle class also seemed as they would like to liberalize and modernize traditional nationalist politics, in order to partake not only in the economic and social life of Northern Ireland but in its political life as well. For these groups the Republican movement and the IRA did not offer potential policy (Hennessey 1997). In other words, “their growing economic and social confidence was transformed into the desire for full and equal rights or citizenship” (Wichert 1991:100).

If Catholics wanted to take part in real politics, they had to look to elsewhere. Most middle class Catholics seemed to have been willing to support O'Neill's policies or give him at least the advantage of the doubt. Richard Rose carried out a major survey of political and social attitudes in Northern Ireland in 1967-68 and this survey showed that most Catholics (65 percent, against 56 percent of Protestants) felt that community relations had enhanced since O'Neill had become Prime Minister. This did not, on the other hand, automatically adjust their political outlook and Nationalist politicians could for that reason calculate on some support from their constituencies, when they agreed to the role as official opposition in 1965. The constitutional settlement was still rejected by a majority of Catholics, even amongst those in public employment, but only 5 percent of the population as a whole thought religion was a major barrier to getting a job (Wichert 1991). It is quite clear says Wichert (1991:101), that “the population of the province, if in unequal proportions, thought that community relations had improved and a very great majority of them (79 percent Protestants and 89 percent Catholics) wanted further improvements.” The problems remained, however, for the Catholics that without constitutional changes that would permit them to take part in government, they would have no actual political part to play in Northern Ireland (Wichert 1991).

There were also signs of greater tolerance and relaxation in the Catholic Church. While the “secularization” of Catholicism entered Northern Ireland disproportionately, it was found that local priests in particular in rural areas, acted much less as political guides and no longer took a lead on political issues. This in itself made Catholic politicization achievable, and it was for the most part Catholics middle class not ordained as clergymen that acted upon it. As early as 1958 a Catholic speaker at a social studies conference had put emphasis on that the Catholic community had to “co-operate with the de facto authority” and to “show a readiness to serve” (Wichert



1991:101). This new recognition was mirrored in the National Unity, a Catholic middle class movement that originated in Belfast in 1959 and attracted support there rather than in the Nationalist countryside. National Unity did not have success in uniting all nationalists but did put some force on the Nationalist Party to work out a political programme. With this, Catholics made a start to stake their claim for full political participation and ultimately a share in power. But there remained remarkable difficulties in directing this political awakening into effective organization. From 1964 to 1969 the politically moderate Eddie McAteer, who accepted the role of official opposition for his party at Stormont, led the Nationalist Party. But the party did not find it possible to move on from its own anti-partitionist past and develop a new political programme. They did not get any help in this either by the unwillingness of unionists at Stormont to embrace and welcome the new official opposition (Wichert 1991).

In retrospection, it is easy to overstress the impact of O'Neill's politics on constitutional nationalism and Catholics voters. There was obviously a new tune in the Unionist government and the political atmosphere seemed to be changing, offering real economic, social and perhaps even political progress for Catholics. But it is in the same way clear that Catholic parties were not yet ready or capable to manage these new developments. 48 % of Catholics and 55 % of Protestants thought a "United Ireland" was what the Nationalist Party stood for in the spring of 1968 when asked. 35 % and 31 % respectively said they did not know, even despite the fact that the party had by then made efforts to adopt social policies and develop a higher profile. Maybe it is not shocking that some Catholics voters started to drift towards moderate unionist parties. Middle class voters seem to have moved to towards moderate unionist parties (Wichert 1991).

Those Catholics who were impatient with the traditional Nationalists politics and wanted actively to improve matters politically for their community were, however, frustrated by their party representation and faced with a politically passive community. Out of this grew the pressure groups and extra-parliamentary opposition of the mid sixties that was created by professional middle class people and were encouraged by the rhetoric and promises of O'Neill's policies (Wichert 1991). As time went by, Catholics frustrated with the inadequacy of evidence of reform of the O'Neill government started to organize themselves into political pressure groups, disappointed as they got for the reason of lack of reform. The first of these pressure groups was

the Campaign for Social Justice, which tried to collect and make public evidence of discrimination, particularly in housing and the gerrymandering of elections (see section 4.4) (Hennessey 1997).

O'Neill's motives for reforms were a bit blurred (Wichert 1991), but some analysts have argued that the motivation of O'Neill to undertake reform was driven by his character. He was not trapped in the narrow-minded character of Irish politics, he had traveled much, parts of his education was from abroad, and he had a vision that Northern Ireland could work on lines of greater, if not full, equality between its two societies (Wallace in Kennedy-Pipe 1997). He promoted in particular the toleration towards the Catholic minority (Millar in Kennedy-Pipe 1997). But O'Neill was not hazardous radical. He was really far from being that. He was Anglo-Irish, Eton-educated and had served with the Irish Guards in the World War Two. He entered Stormont in 1946 and spent seven years as finance minister before he became Prime Minister. He seemed as a reasonably safe pair of hands to the Unionist party, though he was sometimes likely to unrealistic ideas such as his 1958 whimsy: Drain Loch Neagh and thus expand Northern Ireland's six counties to seven (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

However, the O'Neill era can also be regarded "as a tragic missed opportunity in that with hindsight they appear to have been the last change to tackle, by political means and in a time of relative peace, Northern Ireland's problems" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:26). Whether more skill and luck perhaps could have prevented the Troubles, the opinion disagrees. O'Neill sought to transform the whole tone of government, presenting the style of Protestant-Catholic settlement in a place of the unrepentantly Protestant attitude of Craig and Brooke. The frequent rumors of leadership challenges ended in 1966 in a serious effort by some backbenchers to remove O'Neill in favour of Brian Faulkner. Though the try was unsuccessful, it served well to demonstrate O'Neill's weakness within even the parliamentary party. In essence O'Neill lacked not just standing in the party but also the personal and political skills necessary to see through even the moderate changes he had tried to carry out. O'Neill was a gentleman from the safe part of County Antrim, compared to Brooke who had been a frontiersman who had helped create and run the B-Specials in a dangerous border area. O'Neill's type of Unionism distanced him from many in the party. He was an unconditional Unionist. He identified himself absolutely with Britain, while

many of his critics were Ulster Unionists first and British second. O'Neill projected total dependence in Britain and for that reason he worried many Protestants because it did not look as if he shared their almost genetic restlessness about London. Looking backwards O'Neill's politics was an insufficient effort to sweep away decades of separation without deal with the underlying problems. It might have been these efforts that swept O'Neill from office (McKittrick and McVea 2000). As early as 1965 the Observer newspaper reported: "He is better liked outside his party than in it" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:33).

## ***4.2. Unionist Opposition***

Nevertheless, these attempts to reform the Northern Ireland society done by O'Neill seemed to be too much and too drastic change for a significant minority of Protestants. What one end of the Unionists spectrum thought can be summed up by a utterance from Paisley about O'Neill's bridge building: "A traitor and a bridge are very much alike, for they both go over to the other side" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:31).

The endless Unionist fear of the traitor inside was to prove a fruitful stream for Paisley to take advantage of in the future. Unionists had been educated in a culture that defined the primary goal as protection of them selves. This, in the beginning defined as protection of the Union, changed into a defence of Stormont, with the Unionist party defined as the key instrument. The idea that Catholics by itself were enemies of the state was inbuilt in many in the Unionist population. Actually, the Prime Ministers Craig and Brooke had defined the Catholics almost literally in those terms. But O'Neill was a Unionist Prime Minister with an exceeded programme apparently planned to bring Catholics back to society, unlike his forerunners. Those who thought that Unionism was about maintain Protestant unity and control and to keep Catholics at arm's length were shocked. On one point these hard-liners were without doubt right. They considered O'Neill's talk of winning Catholics' support for Unionism as complete fantasy, and in reality, the decades that followed produced no real evidence of any significant Catholic support for Unionist party (McKittrick and McVea 2000). But as mentioned earlier (section 4.1), O'Neill got support from some in the Catholic middle class (Wichert 1991).

Concerning Paisley, he grew from a seemingly unimportant “pantomime demon” into a remarkable figure in Unionist politics in the years that followed. Even from he was young, he was a hard line fundamentalist clergyman (McKittrick and McVea 2000). In 1947 he joined the Orange Order and quickly became chaplain to the Junior Orangemen. Shortly after this he started to be seen on Unionist Party platforms. He founded his own Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster in 1951 over which he has the control and his evangelical fundamentalism violently refuses to go along with any theological modernization either within Protestantism or towards friendlier relations with Catholicism. It is from this religious position he speaks to the politics of the province (Wichert 1991) and in 1963 his interest for politics aroused, and he organized a march to protest against the choice by the Lord Mayor of Belfast to half-mast the Union Jack on City Hall to mark the passing away of Pope John XXIII. In 1966 Paisley launched the Protestant Telegraph weekly newssheet and the Protestant Unionist Party (PUP). The revival of Ulster Volunteer Force took the form of Ulster Constitution Defence Committee (UCDC), of which Paisley was a chairman. Paisley led opposition to O'Neill through the UCDC and soon he was able to form the Ulster Protestant Volunteers (UPV), which sprang from UCDC. The UPV was open for membership only to Protestants, but not members of the RUC, with the exception of the exclusively Protestant B-Specials (Hennessey 1997; Wichert 1991). The UCDC constitution stated that they and the UPV, which it governed, were one united society of

“Protestant patriots pledged by all lawful methods to uphold and maintain the Constitution of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom as long as the United Kingdom maintains a Protestant monarchy and the terms of the [seventeenth-century] Revolution Settlement” (Hennessey 1997:139).

The UCDC rules declared, “No one who has ever been a Roman Catholic is eligible for membership. Only those who have been born Protestants are eligible for membership,” and the UCDC and UPV pledged to “maintain the Constitution at all costs” (Hennessey 1997:139). Paisley was the first to make use of newspapers and television publicity, and he early understood that any publicity was good publicity (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

No one of the Unionist party leaders or O'Neill could cope with Paisley in the years that followed after his political interest developed. Paisley was not interested in joining any team, so he could

not be bought off by being brought inside the fold, like it might be able to be done with other figures. There was no real way for O'Neill or anyone else to silence his troublesome disagreement. He went on to build a vote that swung between 10 percent and a high point of more than 30 percent of all votes cast. O'Neill's party in the decades ahead would however remain the primary voice of Ulster Protestants, but in groupings that viewed its politics as insufficiently hard-line, there would be many internal battles and defections. The shadow of Paisleyism would forever hang over the Unionist party. When O'Neill gave up his seat at Stormont in 1970, Paisley won it (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

### **4.3. *Loyalist Violence***

Just as Paisley was the first Protestant extremist to exploit the opportunities of the media, other Protestants extremists were the first to take life. As republicans celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 rising in 1966, a two-month period with a series of attacks led to three killings carried out by the UVF (Wichert 1991). The UVF, though named after the organization that had helped to form Northern Ireland, was far away from the original organization of that name. It was made up of mainly a couple of dozen men who met in the back street pubs often in the Shankill Road district to discuss over drinks means of combating the practically non-existent IRA. Many of the attacks were drunken escapades. Most people were shocked by such incidents, which were condemned from every quarter. The RUC quickly whipped up members of the gang, and some were given long-lasting prison sentence. These events were an unwelcome reminder that for all the talk of modernization, old enmities carried on to boil not far below the surface (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Though most Unionists were in opposition to violence, a sizeable number were also very much against O'Neill. By 1967 sections of the Orange Order were in open uprising against him and "critics at the main Twelfth of July demonstration passing out leaflets condemning his tottering leadership" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:36). Early 1968 Paisleyite demonstrators while attending a Unionist party meeting in Belfast attacked O'Neill with stones, flour and eggs. O'Neill's "sin" had been to visit a convent school some days earlier. All of this meant that O'Neill

was talking about change in society against an increasingly troubled setting (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

#### **4.4. *Civil Rights***

Just as Unionism was revealing signs of coming away from each other, Catholics and Nationalists were breaking new ground in politics. They found new methods of making their political voice heard because British post-war educational reforms had led to a Catholic middle class which was both larger and much more self-confident than ever before. This new generation considered the Nationalist party as out-of-date and unsuccessful, and regarded the IRA and Sinn Féin as belongings to a past age (McKittrick and McVea 2000). In the 1960s a number of Catholic voices emerged that not only criticized Unionism, as was traditional, but also claimed for a greater Catholic involvement in the state. One of these was John Hume's voice and in 1964 as a 27-year-old teacher and credit union organizer, he urged Catholics in a newspaper article to be more outgoing, writing: "There has been no attempt to be positive, to encourage the Catholic community to develop resources which they have in plenty, to make a positive contribution in terms of community service" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:37). His words were signal of rising Catholics restlessness with existing arrangements.

An important organization appeared from Tyrone in the form of the Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ) (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Conn and Patricia McClousky founded CSJ out of the Homeless Citizens' League (HCL) in Dungannon in May 1963, which they also led (Hennessey 1997). CSJ consisted of thirteen Catholics professionals and the organization collected and distributed detailed statistics in support of its charges of discriminations, particularly in housing and gerrymandering of elections. On 17 January 1964 the CSJ was launched in Belfast and it differed from previous minority pressure groups in that it focused its efforts on British public opinion. A crossroad for the Catholics came with the election of a Labour government in 1964. With Conservative governments the Unionist party had not come into any serious conflicts, and the post-war Labour government with Prime Minister Attlee had not presented any threat to the

Unionist cause either.<sup>40</sup> But Wilson as Prime Minister presented another figure (Wichert 1991). Wilson was anti-Unionist and represented a largely Irish Catholic constituency in Liverpool, and he did not do anything to try to hide his disdain for the Unionist party. In June 1965 a Campaign for Democracy in Ulster (CDU), was formed at Westminster and Wilson was pressed into paying attention to Northern Ireland issues attracting the support of around a hundred Labour backbenchers, (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000). The CDU took a lively and continuing interest in Northern Ireland affairs. CDU campaigned against the long-standing convention that ruled out debate of Northern Ireland affairs at Westminster (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

In 1966 an important figure emerged at Westminster: Gerry Fitt. He was to have a long-running career in Northern Ireland politics. He represented the Republican Labour party and won the West Belfast seat at Westminster from the Unionists. At Westminster he made effective uses of the material collected by the CSJ (Hennessey 1997). The Belfast Telegraph summarized the threat he posed to Unionism a year after his election: “He enjoys the friendly recognition of ministers and Labour backbenchers alike. He is an astute politician – one of the most effective non-Unionists who have been sent to Westminster by Northern Ireland – and his presence has materially helped to alter the climate frustration-aggression theory the Ulster Unionists” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:37).

Wilson and his colleagues pushed O'Neill for reforms and summaries of 1966 and 1967 ministerial meetings revealed that Home Secretary Roy Jenkins stressed, worryingly for Unionists, that “a real effort should be made to meet some of the grievances which had been expressed: otherwise Westminster would be forced to act” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:38). O'Neill told his cabinet that there was “an underlying sense of pressure” coming from London. Many in Unionism viewed criticism and opposition as conspiracy and were unprepared to take action to this new circumstance. O'Neill himself was clearly well aware that the game had

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<sup>40</sup> For the most of its history the Ulster Unionist Party maintained a direct organizational link with the British Conservative (and Unionist) Party. It was the convention that elected representatives of the Ulster Unionist Party at Westminster would take the Conservative whip. It was only after the Conservative government of Edward Heath prorogued the Unionist-controlled devolved legislature in Belfast in 1972 that the Ulster Unionists began to organize themselves as a distinct party in the House of Commons. The relationship with the Conservatives has been severely

changed and that pressure from London could not be set aside, but many in his party were slow to understand this. It was against this setting that Catholics and Nationalists gambled upon a powerful new political instrument in the form of the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement was not a party but an umbrella group wide enough to comprise every anti-Unionist element in the land. This civil rights movement was fluid in the meaning that it had no coherent central leadership and no official membership, but in 1967 a committee came into view entitling itself the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

#### ***4.5. Northern Ireland Civil Right Association***

The initiative to form Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) was taken by Dr. Roy Johnston, Anthony Coughlan, Conn and Patricia McClousky, and the Dublin Wolfe Tone Society (McKittrick and McVea 2000; Wichert 1991). Formally, NICRA was brought into existence on 9 April 1967 (Hennessey 1997). However, from the start activists in many districts organized themselves with little or no reference to the supposed leadership. The civil rights movement included supporters of the Nationalist party, members and supporters of the IRA, communists, liberals, trade unionists, assorted left-wingers and radicals, students, middle-class professionals and many more, united in a fluid coalition (McKittrick and McVea 2000). NICRA was, when it emerged says Hennessey (1997), composed of those who, like the IRA, had revolutionary intentions but were in a minority and those who, like the CSJ, were reformist, who were in power.

Although Fitt and other well-known Catholic public figures were in the civil rights movement too, it was a brand new type of better-educated representatives who came to the front, including Hume and Bernadette Devlin. Organizing of marches, designed to generate media coverage and publicize the cause, was the movement's main doings. The black civil rights movement in America and the model of Martin Luther King influenced the movement greatly. The street activities of students and others in Paris, Prague and another places also encouraged the movement. This was to be the new politics, which would break the old mould. Whereas NICRA was never more than the theoretical directing force, the theme of civil rights movement was to

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strained over the last decade. The expectation of Unionist leaders that they would be fully consulted on Northern



capture the mind of the very many Catholics who were not members of any organized body (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

NICRA had a list of demands which included one man – one vote, the redrawing of electoral boundaries, anti-discrimination legislation, a point system for housing allocation, the repeal of the Special Powers Act, and the disbanding of the B-Specials (McKittrick and McVea 2000:38). The strongest of these was the demand for equal voting rights for all citizens, an indication to the different voting arrangements in Stormont and council elections. In council elections subtenants, lodgers and anyone living at home with their parents could not vote, therefore around a quarter of Stormont voters had no say in local government elections (see section 3.5.2). Opinions differ on the precise outcome of the opening of equal voting rights for all citizens might have had, but an unpublished Unionist government study concluded that Nationalists would have profited considerably in Tyrone, Fermanagh and Derry/Londonderry city. This may perhaps have led to a loss of Unionist party control over much of the west, which clarifies why Unionists were so strongly in opposition to universal suffrage (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

By 1968 O'Neill had been in office for five years, but his reform proposals still seemed largely limited to the field of rhetoric. Much of what O'Neill offered as reforms did little to better the lot of Nationalists. Many of the new companies attracted to Northern Ireland wound up either in Belfast or in its satellite towns, often in mainly Protestant areas with mainly Protestant workforces (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Catholics criticized that the largely Catholic west lost out and was bypassed by the much-vaunted industrial modernization. When a new city was projected, it was located in a chiefly Protestant area and demonstratively named Craigavon in memorial of the old Unionist Prime Minister (Wichert 1991). A second university was set up, but there was a political tumult in the northwest when mainly Catholic Derry/Londonderry was passed over in preference of Protestant Coleraine. Derry/Londonderry's Catholics, and indeed many of its Protestants, declared this was a perverse choice explainable only in sectarian terms. While the Unionist rhetoric was new, Catholic politicians criticized that the outcome was the old unfairness under a new name. O'Neill, after five years in office, had barely reduce the embedded system in essential areas such as schools, housing, jobs, and local government it was argued. No

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Ireland policy in return for supporting the Conservatives at Westminster was not fulfilled (Aughey 1996:74-75).

more than seven Catholics of seventy-nine members were included when three public boards were reconstituted as late as 1967. There was a great deal of Protestants opposition to change, both inside and outside his party, whether or not O'Neill was a genuine reformer (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

#### **4.6. *Civil Strife***

NICRA's first manifestation, in terms of making publicity and stressing an issue came in June 1968. The civil rights movement that took to the streets in 1968 came about in a period during which Northern Ireland was undergoing a period of economic and political restructuring (Kennedy-Pipe 1997). The episode has come to be viewed as a determining moment in Northern Ireland's history. Some people even considered it as the beginning of the Troubles, or at least as the spark which set fire to the bonfire. The episode occurred when the young Nationalist MP Austin Currie staged a protest by squatting in a house in the County Tyrone village of Caledon near Dungannon (McKittrick and McVea 2000; Wichert 1991). The County Tyrone had over the years caused many allegations of unjust housing allocation and this particular case led to a lot of local Catholic anger. Local Catholics saw the facts as a clear example of politics and religion taking superiority over housing need: A local Unionist party councillor allocated the house at the centre of the dispute to a nineteen-year-old single Protestant girl. She was a secretary to the councillor's lawyer, who was also a Unionist parliamentary candidate. The girl was given the house in preference to two Catholic families. The families had squatted for a time in the area and they had protested that the same councillors had resisted the building of houses for Catholic tenants in the Dungannon area (Hennessey 1997). Currie raised the matter unsuccessfully both with the local council and at Stormont. As the result of the heated debate that followed Currie was ordered to leave the Commons chamber. He symbolically occupied the girl's house for some hours before he was evicted by the RUC (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

NICRA staged its first large-scale protest march on 16 August. The march went from the village of Coalisland to the town of Dungannon. Two thousands protesters assembled in Coalisland, accompanied by Nationalist bands (Wichert 1991). In Dungannon 1,500 members and supporters of Paisley's UVF met to confront them and this was a pattern that was to be repeated many times.

Confrontation was prevented, and the march passed off peacefully. But the pattern of demonstration and counter-demonstration was established (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000). The next civil rights march, in the city of Derry/Londonderry on 5 October 1968, made history because the violence that followed changed Northern Ireland politics. A left-wing group organized the march and they hoped to provoke the authorities into confrontation. The strategy was successful: O'Neill's remarkably hard-line Minister for Home Affairs, William Craig, forbid the march, and that move puffed up the numbers joining it. The RUC overreacted and used water cannon and batons on a clearly peaceful group of marchers (Wichert 1991). A Dublin television cameraman taped the RUC actions on film. He recorded the scene as a senior RUC officer used a long blackthorn stick, the official symbol of his authority, to rain heavy blows randomly on a number of marchers. In the years that followed the film clip was broadcast on television hundreds of times, almost making an explanation of how the Troubles broke out. Local hospitals later reported treating seventy-seven civilian casualties, most of who had bruises and cut to the head (McKittrick and McVea 2000). One of these heads belonged to Gerry Fitt. He had taken three Labour MPs with him to Derry/Londonderry to view the march and had been in the front line when the police moved in (Fitzsimmons 1993). An official report later concluded that RUC had used their batons indiscriminately. Fitt later recounted, "A sergeant grabbed me and pulled my coat down over my shoulders to prevent me raising my arms. Two other policemen held me as I was batoned on the head" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:41).

The pictures of Fitt's bloody head and shirt and of the angry police officer flashed around the world and "at a stroke rewrote the basic grammar of Northern Ireland politics" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:42). The film got a worldwide audience with a clear and continually repeated record of events that caused huge damage on O'Neill's government (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The Unionist leadership had to defend their system for the first time, and Craig responded by asserting that the IRA had infiltrated NICRA and that the majority opinion inside NICRA was "communist" (Hennessey 1997:142). The events in Derry/Londonderry on 5 October caused a flare-up of anger inside the Catholic community and it pledged the civil rights movement a level of support in Northern Ireland and far beyond that was overwhelming. In the days and weeks later, marches, sit-ins, demonstrations, protests and court appearances became almost daily happenings. O'Neill's instinct was that concessions had to be made quickly, but as he sought

support for this many in the party required an old-style Unionist response to challenge the rebels (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Statement in the British press, the world press and at Westminster was overwhelmingly critical, and the Westminster convention of not discussing Northern Ireland affairs faded away. O'Neill was summoned to Downing Street by Wilson and the Stormont cabinet sum up for 14 October 1968 recorded O'Neill as saying: "...we shall be told that unless we can give a definite undertaking that we will introduce further reforms, Her Majesty's Government will no longer be able to stand aloof from the situation" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:42). The cabinet discussed a number of reforms, but they could only agree on a few largely minor measures and above all would not pave the way for equal voting rights for all citizens (McKittrick and McVea 2000). On 16 November another march was organized and this march drew over 15,000 people. The organizers of the march were able to avert any violence despite another heavy police presence (Fitzsimmons 1993).

#### ***4.7. The End of the O'Neill Era***

O'Neill, Craig and Faulkner met Wilson and James Callaghan in Downing Street on 4 November 1968<sup>41</sup> and Wilson opened the meeting with a reminder that Stormont was subordinate to Westminster and followed it up with a direct threat to cut off some off Northern Ireland's money "...if the United Kingdom government needed to bring in pressure to bear" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:45). Craig said that local government reforms were at work, even if this was a disliked and problematical task. Wilson and Callaghan maintained the push for speedy reforms, especially universal suffrage (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The Unionist arrived at Stormont and set about to construct a set of reforms they hoped might please London while proving tolerable for the Unionist party. On 22 November in response to British pressure the O'Neill government agreed on a five-point reform package which included establishment of a Development Commission to take over the local government powers of Derry/Londonderry City Council, changes in housing policy (a new points system for allocation of houses by local authorities), an ombudsman to be appointed to investigate complaints, limited voting reform, the abolition of the Special Powers Act as soon as it was safe to do so, and with regard to the local

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<sup>41</sup> Hennessey (1997:143) dates the meeting to 5 November 1968.

government franchise, the abolition of company to vote, which gave more than one vote to business (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000).

But the reform proposals were too little and too late for many within NICRA. The CSJ was of the opinion that the reforms fell short for a number of reasons: the Government had not undertaken to “establish British standards,” for there remained, they claimed, a quarter of a million people with no vote. Secondly, the reforms did not undertake, by excluding gerrymandering, to give “just and fair” representation to those who opposed the UUP. The points system proposed for housing allocation was open to alteration by local authorities and therefore “could be modified to suit local Unionist needs” (Hennessey 1997:143). Craig was not satisfied with the propositions either:

“There is all this nonsense about civil rights, and behind it all there is our old traditional enemy exploiting the situation. The civil rights movement is bogus and is made up of ill-informed people who see in unrest a chance to renew the campaign for violence,” he said to O'Neill and Wilson (McKittrick and McVea 2000:47).

The temperature rose further when a confrontation between Paisley supporters and civil rights demonstrators took place on 30 November in the city of Armagh. O'Neill had an increasing feeling that the situation was out of control and made a television appeal on 9 December in an attempt to calm down the situation. This has been known as “The Crossroads Speech.” After O'Neill's speech, moderate elements in the civil rights campaign agreed to a pause in the demonstrations to lower the temperature. In a few days O'Neill's differences with Craig came a head and on 11 December the Prime Minister sacked his Home Affairs minister (Hennessey 1997; Wichert 1991). O'Neill wrote to Craig in the letter sacking him that “...your idea of an Ulster which can go it alone is a delusion” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:47). The disagreement between Craig and O'Neill centred on fundamentally different interpretations of Northern Ireland's position within the UK. Craig claimed,

“Northern Ireland had a federal relationship with Britain, which meant that the Westminster Parliament and the Northern Ireland Parliament each had their own sphere of responsibility, into which the other Parliament could not interfere.” He argued further,

“Section 75 of GIA, stating that the Westminster Parliament retained the supreme authority over all persons, matters and things in Ireland, was merely ‘a reserve power to deal with in an emergency situation’” (Hennessey 1997:148).

O'Neill, in contrast, asked those who supported Craig to “understand that a failure to face up to the constitutional realities was in itself a threat to status that the Unionists valued so much” (Hennessey 1997:149). O'Neill had become pessimistic at this stage in 1968. He wrote in a letter on Christmas Eve, “What a year! I fear 1969 will be worse. The one thing I cannot foresee in 1969 is peace” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:48).

O'Neill's pessimism was well-founded: A radical and mainly political uncommitted conglomeration of students from The Queen's University in Belfast had been so shocked by police behaviour in Derry/Londonderry that they arranged a march from Belfast to Derry/Londonderry in the first four days of January 1969. Out of this grew the People's Democracy (PD), an unstructured and militant body. The march was challenged by groups of loyalists, many of them mobilized by Paisley, and it flared into open violence when the march was ambushed by hundreds of loyalists, including off-duty B-Specials, at Burntollet Bridge in County Derry/Londonderry. This is regarded as one of the key events of the civil rights era (McKittrick and McVea 2000; Wichert 1991). Again the world's television screens showed images of demonstrators with blood flowing from head wounds and once more the occurrence was a public relations disaster for the Unionist government and the RUC. The police was accused of standing by as the surprise attack took place, and even assist to engineer it. The PD won sympathy from almost the entire Catholic community, despite the fact that other civil rights campaigners had criticized them for being irresponsible and provocative earlier. In the following weeks there were many more demonstrations, and the RUC worked hard to cope with so much strife and street activity. The force had just over 3,000 members and they were not used to deal with so many marches and so much awful publicity. O'Neill proclaimed the setting up of the Cameron Commission to investigate the causes of the events of 5 October in Derry/Londonderry; he was desperately seeking to recapture the initiative. This led to the resignation of Faulkner from the Northern Ireland Cabinet in protest. Faulkner considered this as a handing over of

Government responsibility that would place the Unionist Government in the position of looking like to be forced against its will to grant reforms (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000).

In mid-February, eight days after Faulkner's resignation, twelve hard-line Unionist MPs met to demand O'Neill's resignation in order to keep the party united. In response O'Neill announced the dissolution of Parliament and called a general election. This election was called "The Crossroads Election" and was held on 24 February 1969. The election campaign was an unpleasant one and the result was a messy one. During the campaign there was much Unionist infighting between pro-O'Neill candidates and they who not made a secret of their opposition to him (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000). O'Neill had a very small majority in Stormont when the votes were counted, but the Unionist party had fractured. The party often described as a monolith was no monolith longer, and would never be one again. On the Catholics side, the election resulted in a number of Nationalist MPs were replaced by younger civil rights candidates, among them Hume (McKittrick and McVea 2000). In the next weeks a number of bombings at electricity and water facilities increased the sense of instability. Together with a number of troops, a thousand B-Specials were mobilized to guard public utilities. The attacks were credited by the RUC to the IRA, though much later it emerged that the bombs were the work of the loyalist UVF. The UVF was also successfully in an attempt to bring down O'Neill. He wrote later that he was "blown out of office" by the bombings (Hennessey 1997:161; McKittrick and McVea 2000:49). On 28 April 1969 O'Neill announced his resignation but just before he left office, he managed to push equal voting rights for all citizens through the cabinet, but the partition in his party were too deep to let him continue (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000).

O'Neill had difficulties to establish a working relationship to his own party and also with the Catholic side. A Unionist leader with a greater talent than O'Neill might have enjoyed greater success. When the crisis of 1968 and 1969 arrived, the Stormont backbencher were filled with dissatisfied former ministers who felt unjustly treated, together with Unionist MPs who felt little personal loyalty to him. The events of 1968 and 1969 tended to show O'Neill as a figurehead who was not capable to lead Unionism into line with his own modernized rhetoric. O'Neill was the first Unionist leader to realize that Northern Ireland could not forever go on as it was, but he did

not find a way to persuade Unionism as a whole of the need for change, or convince Nationalists that he could deliver it (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

#### **4.8. *The Troops Arrive***

James Chichester-Clark, a distant cousin of O'Neill, succeeded O'Neill as Prime Minister on 1 May 1969. Chichester-Clark was first and foremost a County Derry/Londonderry farmer and secondarily a politician. He beat Faulkner by seventeen votes to sixteen in an election by Unionist MPs at Stormont and he had an almost hereditary claim on his Stormont seat, members of his family having held it since partition. Chichester-Clark survived less than two years before walking out and returning to political darkness and seemed to do so with a sense of release rather than any sense of dissatisfied ambitions (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Chichester-Clark pressed further on with universal suffrage and other reforms, but the focus was moved to the streets (McKittrick and McVea 2000). On 12 July 1969 serious rioting broke out throughout Northern Ireland. Sectarian rioting in July and early August was contained by the RUC (Hennessey 1997), but the critical situation aroused in August 1969, when a controversy over a parade sparked off the crisis. The Apprentice Boys of Derry, an organization similar to the Orange Order, wanted to stage its usual march in Derry/Londonderry. Both Stormont and the Wilson government discussed for some time whether the march should be admitted because they were worried that there could be a major outbreak in the tinderbox atmosphere of the time. In the end go-ahead was given and the feared flare-up, as expected, took place, as early clashes between Catholics and Protestants rose into what came to be known as the Battle of the Bogside. Violent riot went on for days, with many wounded on both sides. The continuing street battles spread to other places in Belfast and Northern Ireland (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Hundreds of houses were set on fire, thousands of stones and other missiles were thrown, and barricades were set up across the streets. In the middle of all the chaos and damaging, eight people lay dead, four of them killed by the RUC and another by B-Specials (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000).



Chichester-Clark asked London to send in troops to restore order because the police force, which was only 3,000-strong, was no longer able to contain the disturbances and many of its men were exhausted and many were injured. Given the fact that Wilson and Callaghan had already made it clear that if troops did go in, the balance between Belfast and London would change fundamentally, since they would not place the army under Stormont control, Chichester-Clark asked for help with the greatest reluctance. On 14 August 1969, when the first troops marched on to the streets of Derry/Londonderry and Belfast, to relieve the RUC, they did so with many political strings attached (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000). The Catholics welcomed the coming of the soldiers and led to a brief break from the violence. The damages after the violence soon became clear: adding up to the eight deaths, 750 people were injured, 150 of them having suffered gunshot wounds. 180 homes and other buildings were destroyed and approximately 1,800 families had escaped from their homes in the disturbances. Part of the Bogside became a “no-go area”, sealed off by barricades that kept on being in position until 1972 (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The relationship between the Westminster and Stormont government also changed. London officials were stationed in Belfast to act as “London’s eyes and ears,” to pass on orders to Stormont and, in Callaghan’s words, to “put some stiffening into the administration” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:57). Callaghan and Wilson pushed Unionists hard for more and more progress on the reform front and after a short time London had pressed through a reform package which included the end of the B-Specials, an overhaul of policing and other measures. When the explosion of violence took place in Northern Ireland in August 1969 the Taoiseach in the Irish Republic was Jack Lynch. In a broadcast during the August 1969 crisis he declared: “It is clear that the Irish government can no longer stand by and see innocent people injured and perhaps worse” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:58). This enormously significant involvement from a Taoiseach took Dublin policy further than it had ever gone before. Lynch proclaimed the setting up of field hospitals close to the border to treat injured northerners. A number of men from Derry/Londonderry were learned arms training by Irish soldiers in Donegal. The violence of August 1969 brought the southern state into the northern political situation (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The northern violence also resulted in about enormously important changes within Republicanism. The Catholic community had come out worst of the 1,800 families who fled their homes. 1,500 of those who moved were Catholic. Catholics occupied more than 80 percent of the buildings damaged, and six of the eight people killed in mid-August were Catholics. Seeing as one of the roles of the IRA was supposed to be the defence of such areas against assault by the security forces of loyalists, much criticism was directed against the organization for its evident uselessness. The feelings of working-class Nationalists in west and north Belfast that the IRA had failed them are mirrored in the phrase “IRA - I Ran Away” (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000). However, the majority of Catholics did not usually support the IRA, and looked to them only in times of high tension, as August 1969. In such times the IRA was meant to defend areas such as the Falls and Ardoyne against attack. The list of people killed, the pattern of destruction of property and the high number of Catholics refugees offered the evidence that the IRA had not been organized or armed when the crisis came. In the Catholic ghetto back streets Catholics agreed that an effective defence force was needed, and so a new IRA came into existence. This new group may have emerged to defend the ghettos, but it would before long develop into a group being responsible for many killings. By the 1969 the IRA was guided by left-wing theory and basically led from the south of Ireland. Men were forming vigilante groups and defence organizations on the Protestant side too; some of these would in time change into fully-fledged paramilitary groups. More deaths followed those of August 1969. On the surface, the entrance of troops had brought calm back, but in the back streets both republicans and loyalists were preparing themselves for future attack of confrontations (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

#### **4.8.1. The Violence Increases**

The year 1970 was to see progressing declining rather than any new stability. Callaghan kept up the pressure to keep up the progress in the reform programme. Chichester-Clark fulfilled, still always against a background of complaints and frustration from Unionist hard-liners. This opposition in the grassroots was evident when votes drained away from the main Unionist party to Paisley, who in 1970 was elected first to Stormont and then to Westminster (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The Falls Road curfew, in early June, can be seen as a final destroying of the originally good relationship between Catholics and British troops. Following a confrontation between soldiers and locals the army sealed off a large area of the Lower Falls district for several days and soldiers were sent in to do rigorous houses-to-houses searches. The exercise demanded possibly up to 20,000 people not to leave their homes. More than one hundred weapons were uncovered during the searches but in the process huge damage was done to hundreds of households as soldiers prized up floorboards and ransacked rooms. Supplements to such personal humiliation were four deaths, all caused by the army. None of those killed had any IRA or other extreme connections. When troops brought in two Unionist ministers to tour the area in armored cars the sense that the army was being set out against the general Catholic population was made worse (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Another violent milestone came later in July when the army shot dead a Catholic teenager in unclear circumstances during a riot in north Belfast. The harder military line coincided with a change of government at Westminster (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Labour lost the general election in June, and the Conservative leader Edward Heath as Prime Minister and Reginald Maudling as Home Secretary replaced Wilson and Callaghan (Fitzsimmons 1993). Maudling was both less forceful and less wrapped up by the conflict than Callaghan had been (McKittrick and McVea 2000). With a less forceful sense of direction coming from the government, some of the initiative oozed away to the army who, with backing of the Maudling administration, used more aggressive tactics such as the curfew. But the tougher line did nothing to stop the progress of the

general worsening, and in August 1970 the first two RUC officers to be killed by the IRA was killed in south Armagh. Chichester-Clark found himself trapped in the same everlastingly difficult politically position as O'Neill: London constantly pressed for more and more political change, but Unionism, as Paisley's electoral success showed, was turning into more hard-line. All this took place against a difficult background of continuing violence. The introduction of universal suffrage and important changes in policing and housing were included in Chichester-Clark's reforms. The Unionist grassroots were either unenthusiastic or absolute hostile to Chichester-Clark's plan, but most of all they required tougher security. The Unionists believed in a military solution, therefore internment without trial, sealing the border, and flooding republican areas with troops were among the Unionist solutions. Chichester-Clark tried unsuccessfully to convince the grassroots that the army should be subject to political restrictions and he tried with equal lack of success to change the mind of the grassroots, as O'Neill had tried before him, that final authority was located at Westminster rather than Stormont (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

In the second half of 1970 important developments took place within Nationalism in both north and south. The civil rights movement disappeared gradually in significance, to be replaced by a new grouping, the non-violent Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) (Fitzsimmons 1993). SDLP became the most important voice of Nationalism in the north. With Fitt as the leader and Hume as its chief strategist, the party would continue to be the largest northern Nationalist grouping during the Troubles (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The awareness of crisis grew with an escalation of violence in Belfast early 1971. In February the deaths of the first soldier to be shot by the IRA and the first IRA member to be shot by the army took place. The IRA killed seven people in the following days. Three days later the IRA placed a bomb on a County Tyrone mountain and killed five civilians on their way to service a BBC transmitter. Two policemen were shot dead in north Belfast later the same month. In March there was a new low point. Three Scottish soldiers were shot dead by the IRA. The huge effect of their killings is still kept in mind by many as one of the crucial points in Northern Ireland's descent into total violence. Three other soldiers had already died in the Troubles, but the Scottish soldiers were the first ones to be killed off-duty. An estimated 30,000 people attended rallies in Belfast and elsewhere as their funerals took place in Scotland. Four thousands shipyard workers marched

in Belfast demanding internment. Chichester-Clark flew to London to ask Heath for tougher security initiative a few days later. Heath offered only an extra 1,300 troops and Chichester-Clark returned to Belfast and resigned, stepping down from office with an almost noticeable sense of relief 20 March 1971 (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000).

#### **4.8.2. Brian Faulkner as Prime Minister**

Brian Faulkner succeeded Chichester-Clark as Stormont and Northern Ireland's sixth Prime Minister three days after Chichester-Clark's resignation (Hennessey 1997). Faulkner was at the time the most talented Unionist politician. He won the leadership election, defeating William Craig by twenty-six votes to four. It was widely said that he was probably Unionism's last chance to save the Stormont system. After O'Neill and Chichester-Clark, who both had looked like being amateurs in politics, Faulkner looked as a professional politician (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Faulkner attempted from the start to strike a balance that would assure both the Unionist grassroots and the British government through a combination of security and political measures. First he constructed a government that included both wings of the Unionist party, the liberal and the hard-line, and the first-ever non-Unionist cabinet minister in the form of an NILP politician. Although it was true that the NILP man was neither a Catholic nor a Nationalist and that the post was for only six months, this was however seen as a creative step. In June 1971 Faulkner made his big political move by contribute to a shake-up of Stormont. Under his suggestions three new committees would be introduced to review policy and advise on legislation. Opposition members were supposed to lead two of them. The SDLP welcomed this, and they entered talks on the proposals. But politics was overtaken by events on the streets in weeks (McKittrick and McVea 2000). To balance his political compromise, Faulkner had successfully pressed London for a tougher army approach, and he had announced in Stormont on 25 May 1971: "Any soldier seeing any person with a weapon or acting suspiciously may, depending on the circumstances, fire to warn or with effect without waiting for orders" (Hennessey 1997:192). On 8 July 1971 the effect of this was seen when a Catholic man and teenager was shot dead during disturbances in Derry/Londonderry. The incident interrupted the political talks as the SDLP and Hume and other SDLP MPs notified they would withdraw from Stormont unless an independent inquiry was

established to investigate the deaths. When no inquiry was established, they walked out of Stormont 12 July 1971 never to return, and Faulkner's committee offer became hypothetical (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Faulkner intended to balance his Stormont committees offer with a radical security initiative in the form of internment without trial. He saw this as a solution that would stop the progress of violence and in time create a more peaceful mood in which political progress would be easier. Others saw it as a measure of last resort and even desperation. Internment meant "stepping outside of the law and abandoning legal procedures in favour of simply rounding up suspects and putting them behind bars without benefit of trial" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:67). But Faulkner felt at the same time that the decision was one that was virtually forced on him (Hennessey 1997). Both at home and internationally this attracted strong condemnation from Nationalist and human rights bodies (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The Provisional IRA<sup>42</sup> campaign reached an unprecedented level of ferocity in the summer of 1971. By July 55 people had died violently and in the first seven months of 1971 there were over 300 explosions and 320 shooting incidents, and over 600 people received hospital treatment for injuries. Northern Ireland had only one-and-a-half million people; proportionate figures for the whole UK would have meant over 2,000 dead, and in seven months, 11,000 bombings, 11,600 shootings, and 22,000 people injured (Hennessey 1997). Faulkner recalled: "In 1971 people were not hardened to violence, or resigned to accepting it as a background to daily life; they were demanding that the Government do something to stop it, and it quickly" (Hennessey 1997:193). Internment was to Faulkner something close to a last throw of the dice (McKittrick and McVea 2000:67).

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<sup>42</sup> In December 1969 the IRA split into the Official Irish Republican Army and Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) over the decision of its council to grant token recognition to the three parliaments at Stormont, Dublin and Westminster (Wichert 1991:121). PIRA draws its title from the proclamation of the provisional government of the Republic of Ireland at the start of the Easter Rising in 1916, and affirms that any government in Ireland will be "provisional" until the final establishment of a thirty-two county republic (Arthur and Jeffery 1996:56). PIRA emerged as the major descendant of the physical force tradition in the movement (Wichert 1991:121). But "...initially both wings were aggressively militant, but in 1972 the Officials became non-violent" ([www.survivalguide.com](http://www.survivalguide.com)). Broadly speaking, the Officials were Marxists while the Provisionals were republican traditionalists (McKittrick and McVea 2000:60).

During Chichester-Clark's premiership Faulkner had argued against internment, concerned that it should only be used as a weapon of last resort. A series of city bombings in July 1971 tipped the scales, and Faulkner concluded that internment had to be introduced (Fitzsimmons 1993; Hennessey 1997). Success with internment would have meant he might be remembered as the man who defeated the Troubles and led Northern Ireland into a bright new future. A Northern Ireland officer wrote, "If internment failed, very fundamental questions could arise" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:67), and this happened on 9 August 1971 when a large-scale arrest operation began with thousands of troops and police on mission to arrest IRA members. The first raid resulted in around 452 men, although only 342, mainly from the Official IRA, were captured (Hennessey 1997:194). Almost right away it became clear that little worked out as planned. It quickly appeared that the RUC Special Branch had not kept pace with the quickly growing Provisional IRA and its files were out of date and imprecise. Many IRA men already gone on the run, suspecting that internment was on the way. The troops who were sent to make the arrests often found themselves at the wrong house, or did not find an IRA suspect but his father, or brother. Many of these were on the other hand arrested and taken in for "screening." Assertions that soldiers often used brutal methods in the arresting process were denied by the authorities but often verified by later inquiries and court proceedings (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

For Faulkner and for the rest of society internment was not success but something more like a disaster, and the opening of a new phase with a much higher level of violence. The use of internment continued for another four years and it attracted much condemnation of Britain during that time and it never looked like they could defeat the IRA. The clumsiness of the RUC Special Branch was made worse by the casual brutality used by troops often on people who were not members of the IRA during and after the arrest operations. Faulkner was heavily criticized for the fact that not a single loyalist had been jailed, leading to the charges of obvious partiality (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The British ambassador to Dublin at that time, Sir John Peck, later wrote: "Internment attacked the Catholic community as a whole. What was worse, it was directed solely against the Catholics, although there were many Protestants who provided just as strong grounds for internment" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:70).

Before 9 August 1971, 31 people were killed, in the rest of August 35 died. Between 9 August and the end of the year around 150 people were killed. The dead included soldiers, members of the IRA and many civilians (McKittrick and McVea 2000). By 12 August 7,000 people, for the mostly Catholics were left homeless as their houses were burned. In the year before the internment 34 people had been killed (Hennessey 1997), in 1971 2,600 were injured and 17,000 homes were searched (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Internment might be seen as a response to IRA violence, but many Catholics in areas such as west Belfast thought of IRA activity as an answer to violence from the authorities. The increase in IRA violence confirmed the underlying support the organization could command among working-class Catholics. The fact that the IRA was able to intensify its violence in the wake of internment showed that in its strongholds it had considerable and for sure fast expanding reservoir from which it draw recruits and other support. One more basis of criticism was the significant number of Catholics who died in the hands of the troops. In the second half of 1971, half of the 150 people who died were Catholics civilians; and of these around 29 were killed by soldiers. In some cases the army acknowledged that its men were at fault and apologized for causing deaths, in other cases the army denied that disproportionate force had been used. In many other cases the army said that the men and youths they had shot dead had been armed when soldiers had shot them. In some cases this may have been true, but in most it was not. At the time however, the army insisted that many of those shot dead were gunmen. All this meant that many non-republicans and their families became radicalized and often became republicans. The SDLP declared that it would not return to Stormont until internment was ended. Many Catholics withdrew from public life and some 200 Catholics members left the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), the force which had replaced the B-Specials in 1970 (McKittrick and McVea 2000; Wichert 1991). December 1971 brought an incident with one of the highest civilian death tolls in the Troubles. A small Catholic bar in north Belfast was blown up with the death of fifteen people as the result. The attack was done by the UVF together with the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), which was growing in strength in areas such as the Shankill (McKittrick and McVea 2000).



## **4.9. *The End of Stormont***

### **4.9.1. The most Violent Year**

The worst year of the Troubles was 1972; its death toll was almost five hundred and far exceeding any other year. Fourteen of those deaths took place in Derry/Londonderry on 30 January, in what was to be remembered as one of the key events of the Troubles: The Bloody Sunday. Thirteen people were killed, another man died later, and another thirteen were injured when soldiers of the Parachute Regiment and other units opened fire following a large illegal civil rights march in Derry/Londonderry city (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000). Even more men and youths were driven into paramilitary groups after this event. Gerry Adams wrote according to the Bloody Sunday: “Money, guns and recruits flooded in to the IRA” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:77). The effect was a dramatic increase in Nationalist alienation. Most of those Catholics who had not yet left public life did now. The events of Bloody Sunday created a wave of anger throughout the Catholic community. Three weeks later, in late February, more violence followed when the Official IRA staged a revenge attack on the Parachute Regiment’s headquarters in Aldershot More. They failed to kill paratroopers instead they killed a Catholic chaplain, a gardener and five women members of the domestic staff (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000). With the publication of the report into Bloody Sunday carried out by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery, a fresh wave of Nationalist indignation followed. His conclusion that the firing of some paratroopers had “bordered on the reckless” brought a flood of criticism and assertions that it was a “whitewash” and a cover-up rather than an trustworthy effort to find out how fourteen people were shot dead by soldiers. Two young women were killed and seventy others were injured when a particularly shocking IRA attack brought a bomb that went off in a popular Belfast city centre bar on a busy Saturday afternoon early March. Two weeks later car bomb in Donegall Street, left by the IRA, killed seven people close to Belfast city centre (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2000).

#### **4.9.2. The Final Weeks of Stormont**

All of this increased the feeling of crisis and led to action from the British government. Heath, Maudling and other ministers had already considered a wide range of options. Some of these options would have alarmed the Unionist greatly if they had known of them. One idea was a repartition: to divide Northern Ireland into a Protestant and a Catholic region and the Catholic region should be allowed to join the Republic. A different option was to have Northern Ireland governed in cooperation by Britain and the Republic, and its citizens should have dual citizenship (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

Faulkner went to Downing Street five days after Bloody Sunday and he urged Heath to continue with interment, arguing that if violence could be crushed he “would be in a strong position to urge magnanimity upon the majority.” Faulkner spoke against most of Heath’s options, and he made clear his two main points. The first was resistance to contracting Catholics a place in government. He disagreed strongly in opposition to a new coalition involving Unionists and Nationalists, saying it was unworkable. He also refused to consider a Westminster take-over of security powers. Heath and his ministers were skeptical to Faulkner and had lost confidence in the power of the Stormont regime to restore order. Faulkner set off to London 22 March and it was for a meeting that would bring the end of Unionist government. Faulkner returned to Belfast and talked it over with his cabinet and they collectively voted to resign. It seems that Heath had expected this. A two-day protest strike was set up by Craig and Vanguard<sup>43</sup> and brought Northern Ireland to a virtual standstill in late March. Up to 200,000 workers downing tools, most motivated by righteous anger, some by threats. At 4.15 p.m. on 28 March 1972<sup>44</sup> Stormont adjourned for the last time, and this ended an existence of just half a century (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

It was over security matters that the Stormont system finally collapsed and between the summer of 1969 and the resignation of the Northern Ireland Government, with Faulkner as Prime

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<sup>43</sup> Craig formed an organization called Ulster Vanguard Movement in November 1971 in direct response to increasing rumours of Direct Rule (McKittrick and McVea 2000:80; Wichert 1991:125). This movement was a fringe organization within the Unionist Party (Hennessey 1997:208).

Minister, in March 1972, London steadily expanded its control over security policy (Arthur and Jeffery 1996). In other words: Stormont fell because Heath came to decide that Faulkner could deliver neither security success nor political progress when Northern Ireland was locked into serious crisis. Interment, as well as being terribly counterproductive on the streets, had also smashed all hope of early political advance (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

The 1972 figure of almost 500 killings stands as a clear picture the lethal depths to which the Troubles fall. There were roughly 2,000 explosions and over 10,000 shooting incidents, and an average of around 30 shootings per day. Approximately 5,000 people were injured. In the worst month of the entire troubles, July 1972, almost a hundred people died as both republican and loyalist groups went on an uninhibited rampage. As the year 1972 opened, 17,000 soldiers were accessible for duty; when it ended a series of quick strengthening had brought the number to 29,000. Violence from loyalists escalated considerably from the spring 1972 when working-class Protestants turned in their thousands to paramilitarism as insecurity and uncertainty rose. Any hopes that the shut down of Stormont and the end of Unionist rule would lead to a decline of violence were soon dashed. 250 people died in the twelve months up to direct rule and in the twelve months that followed, the killing rate doubled (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

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<sup>44</sup> Hennessey uses 24 March 1972 as the date of the end of Stormont.

## **5. Conclusion: Northern Ireland and the Theories on Armed Conflicts**

Can the theories from my second chapter explain why the Troubles broke out in Northern Ireland? In the modern world, says Goldstein (1994), armed conflicts occur mostly in poor or undemocratic or transitional countries. Smith (1997a) further says that poverty is one of the most obvious and the most easily identifiable facts among the cluster of social facts that are repeatedly found in the background to conflict. Hauge and Ellingsen (1998), among others, support this. They argue that economic conditions come out as the most important explanatory factors and that a low level of economic development is the key issue to conflict. GNP per capita has a negative effect on civil war (Ellingsen and Hauge 1998). Muller and Weede (1990:624) assert: “High rates of economic growth reduce the incidence of political violence.” Another important cause of armed conflict is type of political system. Most theories on the relationship between the repressiveness of political institutions (regime repressiveness) and political violence confirm an inverted U-curve between democracy and political violence (such as Hegre et al. 2000; Muller and Weede 1990). Most theories on the inverted U-curve show that democracies and autocracies are less likely to experience political violence and conflict than regimes in between these two or regimes in transitions. Concerning relative deprivation, this is likely to occur in a society if one group compare themselves with another group it is naturally to compare with, and always find out that they come out worse than the other group. Relative deprivation can motivate the members of the “worse” group to violence.

### ***5.1. Northern Ireland and Poverty***

According to economic level, Northern Ireland has had to put up with a substantially lower level of wealth than the rest of the UK throughout the most of its existence (Wichert 1991), and Northern Ireland is labelled “a region with economic problems” (Aschehoug and Gyldendal, vol 10, 1988:227). However, Northern Ireland is not poor by international standards and Northern Ireland belongs to a part of the world classified as high-income countries (the rich countries of the Western Europe in the North). Northern Ireland is not a poor country compared to countries

in Africa. Almost all countries in Africa belong to the group classified as low-income countries. Armed conflict is concentrated in the world's poorest countries. Many parts of Africa have weak economies and no democracies and therefore poverty, violence and brutality scar the region (Smith 1997a). Stedman (1996) says many African countries have long-term problems and their resolution will depend on economic development.

In the UK, there has been a marked economic change in the 20th century, particularly marked improvements in the standard of living. In Northern Ireland, housing illustrates these developments. One sixth of the population moved into new houses between 1926 and 1937 (Wichert 1991). Health sector and education had a similar picture. For children from poorer families education improved gradually, but was nonetheless considerably behind the rest of Britain. The number of private cars increased; there was a general improvement, but Northern Ireland was still behind the rest of UK. But the most significant point is "Northern Ireland, while remaining relatively deprived throughout the period [late 1920s and 1930s], in absolute terms experienced considerable improvements for the vast majority of its population" (Wichert 1991:25). When the Electricity Board of Northern Ireland was founded in 1932, consumption rose almost threefold in the following six years. Electrification proceeded rapidly. In addition, drinking and drunkenness declined and were replaced by other leisure activities such as cinema going and radio listening. Active and passive participation in various sports increased as much as in Britain. With regard to violence, the average number of incidences of violent deaths was lower than in Britain. Sectarian violence seemed to be contained by improved living standards. However, compared to other regions in the UK the province looked as if it was doing badly, but by its own standards Northern Ireland did quite fine (Wichert 1991). Statistical information can, at least in part, be blamed for the misleading picture that often arises. Wichert (1991:26) says:

"While quite detailed figures are available for the province, this is rarely the case for other regions with the result that Northern Ireland more often than not is compared with the whole of the UK rather than with other regions, a comparison in which it is bound to be disadvantaged."

But if poverty does not explain the armed conflict in Northern Ireland, relative deprivation might be a factor that might be able to help to explain this conflict.

### **5.1.1. Northern Ireland and Relative Deprivation**

There is evidence in the literature on Northern Ireland that Catholics tend to be poorer than Protestants, and there is evidence that the Catholics concluded that they were poorer because they were Catholic, and this was very much because they were Catholic in a Protestant-dominated province. From this comparison relative deprivation is likely to occur if the difference is large enough and is felt to be very unfair.

Generally, the Catholic complaint about the Northern Ireland society was divided into two categories. They claimed to be discriminated against in housing, in employment, the public service, and in education. They argued that Unionists had preserved their political dominance by the gerrymandering of electoral boundaries, most especially in Derry/Londonderry. Second, they complained of direct repression by the apparatus of the state, in particular by the use of the special powers against republicans (Coogan 1995; Steward 1977).

Catholics and Nationalists were considered as second-class citizens, as fundamentally dangerous to the state, and less deserving of houses and jobs than their Protestant neighbours. Housing was an area that produced much Catholic grievance. After 1945 a major building program was presented to upgrade the very poor housing standards (Cochrane 1999). Housing was mainly in the hands of local councils, and while many types of council operated in a non-controversial manner, in others policy was distorted for political ends. In local government the electorate was a full one-quarter smaller than that for the Belfast parliament and therefore each vote had an extra significance. Voting was limited to ratepayers and their spouses and a new house would often carry two votes, a matter that could be of great political significance in areas where the Unionist and Nationalist votes were equally balanced. Subtenants, lodgers, and anyone living at home with their parents could not vote. These restrictions affected the poorer sections of the population [the Catholics], and these sections were later to present one of the most potent slogans for the civil rights movement with its demand for “one man – one vote” (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The most frequent criticisms of housing allocation were of councils in the western counties where battles for control were the hardest fought. The County Tyrone had over the years caused many

claims of unjust housing allocation and this led to a lot of local Catholic anger, because they saw the unfair housing distribution as a clear example of politics and religion taking superiority over housing need (Hennessey 1997).<sup>45</sup>

With regard to employment, the RUC security forces made jobs available for Protestants and this “tradition” was only one of many Protestant advantages (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The RUC was a representation of repression for many Catholics, with its widespread allegations that its members were involved in the murdering of Catholic civilians (Hennessey 1997). The civil service was predominantly Protestant, with perhaps 10 percent Catholic representation in its lower ranks. A 1943 survey confirmed that there were no Catholics in the 55 most senior jobs, with only 37 Catholics in the 600 middle-ranking posts (McKittrick and McVea 2000:11). The picture was similar with only random exceptions in most local authorities and other parts of the public sector: “There were no Catholics among the cabinet, the senior staff in the Stormont Commons, the top ranks of the RUC, the Civil Service Commission, and other important jobs” (McKittrick and McVea 2000:11). The representatives of Catholics and Nationalists were effectively banned from political power or influence (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Therefore it is not surprising that Catholics did not feel like joining the police or government services, not only because there were repeated incidents of discrimination within these services, but also because their community identity forbade participation and required a defensive attitude (Wichert 1991).

Protestants dominated the private sector: many large firms, and indeed whole industries, commonly had workforces that were more than 90 percent Protestant, while Catholics dominated the lower-status occupations, such as in the drink trade. Few Catholics were employed in shipyards and heavy engineering concerns. At times of high tension some of the big companies had periodic clean-outs in which Catholic workers were expelled from the work force. Not surprisingly, Catholics being without a job was generally more than double Protestant unemployment, in part because of these patterns and partly because a higher proportion of Catholics lived in areas of high unemployment such as the west (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Breen and Devine (1999:58) support this: “Catholics experience much higher level of

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<sup>45</sup> An example is the allocation of a house to a nineteen-year-old single Protestant girl, in preference to two Catholic

unemployment than Protestants.” It seems likely that practices such as recruitment of staff by word of mouth or on the recommendation of a friend or a relative contributed to part of this picture. Generally this meant the sign up of another Protestant since most employers, particularly those working in large companies, were Protestant. Such practices played a part in keeping up employment gap, though seeming to be the natural course of things in the eyes of those who profited from them (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The feeling of being exploited and suppressed as a group further fuelled the Catholics perception of discrimination in their everyday work experience (Wichert 1991).

Regarding education, one creditable and important step done by the first Unionist government was its sponsorship of the Education Act of 1923, but this did in fact led to discrimination of Catholic schools: through that Act, the government tried to establish a non-sectarian, publicly-operated elementary school system. But neither Protestants nor Catholics nor the Orange Order supported this Act, because no side preferred religious mixing in schools. “The Catholics Church demanded that Catholic children should be educated in Catholic schools with a Catholic ethos” (Hennessey 1997:41). Therefore the government, as an alternative, applied in following years a scheme for financing education in Ulster. This gave some support to completely independent schools, but granted extra support to schools in proportion to the amount of control over them that their administrators transferred to the state. In fact this meant that the Catholic schools, attended by more or less Catholic children, received the smallest amount of government aid (Fitzsimmons 1993). Instead of transforming the education system by establishing a non-sectarians, secular system, the sectarian tensions and grievances was heightened. This 1923 Education Act created three categories of schools (Hennessey 1997): controlled, maintained, and voluntary. They differ in terms of management and financial structures. Education and library committees financed controlled schools, but Protestant Churches were guaranteed a majority on school management boards. The Catholic Church rejected to place its school under such an arrangement with the government in order to protect a Catholics ethos. Later an agreement was reached to allow Catholic schools to get financial aid from education and library boards, with the government representing a minority on school management boards. The Department of Education for Northern Ireland (established in 1921) meets the capital and running costs of voluntary non-

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families (see section 4.6).



maintained schools. Controlled schools are for the most part Protestant, maintained schools are more or less Catholic, and voluntary schools are all grammar schools and can be either Catholic or Protestant. The educational system in Northern Ireland is divided by religion, with separate Catholic and Protestant systems at both the primary and secondary levels. This division is an effect of historical resistance to the state's effort to set up a non-denominational system of schools (Breen and Devine 1999).

But with the Education Act passed at Stormont in 1947 far-reaching changes took place. This Act introduced a new structure of primary schooling (now ending at the age of eleven and not fourteen as before): the Eleven Plus examination. This examination enabled brighter children to receive grammar-school education irrespective of their economy (Wichert 1991) and leading on to a new opportunity for obtaining grants for university-level study (Fitzsimmons 1993). The White Paper of December 1944 prepared the ground for this Act and immediately there was an angry debate about the traditionally controversial issues of appointment of teachers, religious instructions and grants to voluntary schools. Since 1930 schools had appointed teachers through the schools' management committee in which the Churches' interests had become firmly well established (Wichert 1991). However, the main controversy was over the grants to voluntary schools, because most of them were under Catholic management. Nationalists demanded 100 % grants for all schools, but Unionists warned against the continuing appeasement of the Catholic Church. Once more the pattern of prejudice, mistrust, and entrenched power of the two communities asserted itself. In the end, says Hennessey (1997), the result was an Act that radically changed educational provisions for Northern Ireland without touching upon the social divisions that were rooted in the community, sustained and carried on in the schools.

The Act required county schools to hold collective worship and religious instruction but released teachers from the previous requirement to teach religious education if called upon to do so. The Act also raised the grants given to voluntary schools for new building and reconstruction, maintenance, lightening, heating and cleaning from 50 to 65 %. The grammar-school system was reformed by a compromise, because most of them were voluntary and had long traditions of independence that they were not willing to give up. Henceforth 80 % of places were held in reserve for qualified pupils and paid for by local authority scholarships, while the remaining

places could be filled with fee-paying pupils (Hennessey 1997). Thus education was modernized and changes took place, this was done at the cost of continued and increased socio-religious segregation. The narrow-mindedness of both sides forbade a compromise in this field, and this in turn once more increased the grievances of the poorer section of the population, and confirmed Protestant suspicion about the existence and continuation of a Catholic cultural state within the state (Wichert 1991).

In the end, Northern Ireland was a society where Catholics tended to be over-represented among the unemployed and economically and socially lower rated occupations, and under-represented in the upper occupational classes and the higher status industries like engineering. Unionism dominated on every political level: Westminster, Stormont and in a disproportionate number of local authorities. Social and economic life was similarly dominated, supported by the geographical location of industry and agriculture, the Ulster Unionist Council and the Orange Order (Wichert 1991). A consequence of Unionist dominated politics was that they were able to use patronage to deliver positions to their constituencies, as well as favour them in other important ways. In the area of public housing, the Unionists' giving preference to Protestants gained a double benefit: it kept their supporters happy, and it ensured that the physical distribution of the population among electoral wards and districts could be carefully planned so as to maintain local Unionist control (Fitzsimmons 1993).

From all this, it is not surprising that the Catholics compared themselves to the Protestants and that relative deprivation occurred as a consequence of this group comparison.

## ***5.2. Northern Ireland and Regime Type***

Can the regime type in Northern Ireland explain the outbreak of the Troubles? Northern Ireland is neither an undemocratic nor transitional "state" and for that reason the probability of outbreak of a civil war should be low. Undemocratic and transitional regimes are the two most conflict-prone regime types, but since Ireland got partitioned, the regime type in Northern Ireland has been democracy. With this background there should be little possibility for a civil war in Northern Ireland.

Democracy started to develop early in the UK. In 1215 the aristocracy imposed the Magna Charta<sup>46</sup> on the King (Queen), to limit his/her power in their own interest. The aristocracy showed little interest in what ordinary people thought or wanted. The Parliament in the UK began to meet in Westminster from 1340 and this can be considered the birthplace of modern parliaments. The revolutions in 1642<sup>47</sup> and 1688<sup>48</sup> asserted the citizens right to participate in politics, but this was limited to the aristocracy and the gentry, and to a less degree the commercial class, rather than the citizens in general. The right to vote was far from universal (Aschehoug and Gyldendal 1987, vol 3; Smith 2002). Today, the UK is among twenty-four of the world most durable democracies. These twenty-four democracies have a history of free elections without major interruptions since 1945 or shortly thereafter. To become a member of this group, a country has to qualify under the criteria long-term and uninterrupted democracy (Lijphart 1994). Kavanagh (2000) says Britain has had democratic stability since 1918. The UK's system of parliamentary government is not based on a written constitution: there is no constitution set out in any single document. The constitution is the result of gradual evolution over many centuries (Gallagher et al. 1992). Together with Israel and New Zealand, the UK is one of only three democracies without a written constitution (Bogdanor 1996). Four sources make up the British constitution: statute law,<sup>49</sup> common law,<sup>50</sup> conventions,<sup>51</sup> and "works of authority"<sup>52</sup> (Gallagher

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<sup>46</sup> Magna Carta: The charter of English liberties granted by King Johan in 1215 under the threat of civil war and reissued with alteration in 1216, 1217, and 1225. The solemn circumstances of its first granting have given to Magna Carta of 1215 a unique place in popular imagination; quite early in its history it became a symbol and a battle against oppression. Clause 39 of the charter of 1215 states that "no freemen shall be ... imprisoned or dispossessed [dispossessed] ... except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land" (The New Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. 7, 1974:673).

<sup>47</sup> In 1642 a civil war broke out in England over the question of ultimate power in the state (Hill 1993:94-95).

<sup>48</sup> An invitation was sent to William of Orange to invade England to "rescue" England from another Catholic King (the son of King James 2). The Declaration of Rights asserted the peoples and the Parliaments regards to the King. These rights was asserted again in The Bill of Rights (1689): The citizens shall be allowed to participate in politics (Aschehoug og Gyldendal STORE NORSKE Leksikon (bind 4, 1987:412; Hill 1993: 170-171).

<sup>49</sup> Statute law is some very fundamental pieces of legislation, such as the 1707 Act of Union that brought Scotland into the UK while preserving a separate Scottish church and legal system. But the fact that statute law is part of the British constitution shows that the common view that Britain has an "unwritten constitution" is not entirely true; the constitution is at least partly written (Gallagher et al. 1992:64-65). Government of Ireland Act is also an example of a statute law (Kavanagh 2000).

<sup>50</sup> Common law includes some customs such as the supremacy of parliament and major judicial decisions (Gallagher et al. 1992:65).

<sup>51</sup> Conventions, which dictate certain things – such as the appointment of a Prime Minister who does not hold a seat in the House of Commons – cannot be done simply because it is generally accepted by the political elite that they cannot be done (Gallagher et al. 1992:65). Conventions can also be named "traditional rights" ([www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)).

<sup>52</sup> "Works of authority" which is written by scholars of the constitution also affect perceptions of what exactly the constitution consists of (Gallagher et al. 1992:65).

et al. 1992). The British Parliament has also ratified The European Convention of Human Rights.<sup>53</sup>

The UK has a “first-past-the-post”-voting system (“winner-take-all”-system) for the election of the members of the House of Commons. The United Kingdom and France are alone in the Western Europe in not using proportional representation to elect MPs.<sup>54</sup> The UK is divided into as many as electoral districts as there are parliamentary seats – currently 659 – and in each district the candidate who has the most votes wins the seat, whether or not it is a majority (Steiner 1998). PR (STV) was the voting system when Northern Ireland was created but the Unionists abolished it in the 1920s. From that moment, Northern Ireland practised democracy in the same way as the rest of the UK (Steiner 1998). Northern Ireland got its own parliament in 1921 when the six counties of Ulster remained British and the rest of Ireland obtained its independence, but in 1972 Stormont was closed down because of the Troubles and local self-government was suspended and direct rule imposed from London (Kavanagh 2000). The history of democracy in Northern Ireland shows that Northern Ireland is not a transitional country either because there has been democracy since the creation of Northern Ireland to the time when the Troubles broke out. But if the regime type cannot explain the outbreak of the Troubles, maybe the voting system in the regime type can? (See section 5.5 for discussion to what extent Northern Ireland has really been a democracy).

### **5.2.1. Voting System**

The Government of Ireland Act 1920 had set up a PR (STV) electoral system, the single transferable vote (STV) for the Northern Ireland parliament. However, subclause § 14(5) made provision for the adjustment of the electoral system after three years (given that the number of MPs remained the same and that the population was considered in any redistribution of seats). It is not easy to give good reasons for this provision given the obvious intentions of the PR (STV) (to avoid clearly unfair outcomes in elections, as can be the result when “first-past-the-post”-

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<sup>53</sup> “...all member states [of the European Union] have ratified the European Convention of Human Rights” (Menéndez 2001:16).

<sup>54</sup> Since 1997 Protestants reforms of voting have been introduced for European legislations and for the new devolved legislatures in Scotland and Wales (Kavanagh 2000:116).

system is used<sup>55</sup>), and that the Unionists had made it clear that they opposed PR (STV) and planned to abolish it if they could (O’Leary and McGarry 1993).

The Unionist party’s leaders believed that the new state could only continue to exist if the power were securely in loyal Protestant hands. This was evident from the start of the new state. The first the Unionists did after been put in charge by Westminster, were to make sure that their power would be both undiluted and continuing. As a result, one of the new government’s earliest acts was to set about changing the voting system and local council boundaries. Since the seventy-three local authorities were significant as sources of power and support in areas such as housing and education this was a key measure. A number of the councils in Nationalist hands were troublesome and a number of western councils had symbolically voted to break away from Northern Ireland and link up with the south, while others refused to acknowledge the authority of the new government. Craig, Northern Ireland’s first Prime Minister, answered the troublesome councils by adjusting the voting system and later changing the boundaries so the Unionists could deal with such rebellious councils by simply taking control of them (McKittrick and McVea 2000; Cochrane 1999).

The system of PR (STV) was ended by the UUP in 1922 for local elections and in 1929 for Stormont parliamentary elections (O’Leary and McGarry 1993) and the constituency boundaries were redrawn. The change in electoral systems in 1929 drastically damaged the degree of electoral competition in Northern Ireland:

“The UUP obtained exactly what it wanted: a British voting system which focused elections on a straight fight between nationalists and unionists, cemented its status as the hegemonic party, and disadvantaged all smaller electoral groupings which might have fragmented the unionist vote” (O’Leary and McGarry 1993:125).

The elimination of PR (STV) was by no means just a technical adjustment. The PR (STV) system had been built in both as a protection and as a symbol of respect for the different views of

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<sup>55</sup> The 1992 British General Election illustrates the “first-past-the-post” capacity to permit an “unfair” outcome: the Conservatives won 42 percent of the vote and 51 percent of the seats, whereas the Liberal Democrats won 18 percent of the vote and 2 percent of the seats. Such an outcome can occur because, within each constituency, the winning party takes 100 percent of the representation (i.e., the one and only seat) while all the other parties or candidates receive zero representation (Sinnott 1993:67)

Catholic and Protestant minorities in the two parts of Ireland. The consequence of ending it was that the Nationalists lost their majorities in thirteen of twenty-four councils they had originally controlled (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Professor John Whyte (cited in McKittrick and McVea 2000:8) concluded when he surveyed the electoral consequences decades later: “Nationalists were manipulated out of control on a number of councils where they had a majority of electors. This is one of the clearest areas of discrimination in the whole field of controversy.” Even though Northern Ireland’s second city, Derry/Londonderry had a clear Nationalist majority (Cochrane 1999), it moved from Nationalist to Unionist control (McKittrick and McVea 2000) (see section 5.2.2 for gerrymandering). The new system, “first-past-the-post,” was of huge advantage to the Unionist party (McKittrick and McVea 2000), and they defended the new system by arguing that “PR was not British, was undemocratic, prevented strong government, and contributed to indecisiveness and inefficiencies” (O’Leary and McGarry 1993:121). Craig argued that PR (STV) was costly, caused confusion, and created constituencies that were too large (O’Leary and McGarry 1993). These criticisms of PR (STV) were thin and self-serving. The democratic credentials of STV are more remarkable than the “first-past-the-post”-system; the latter one treats some votes as more significant than others and exaggerates the strengths of majorities. The preference for strong majority governments was a rhetorical slogan covering up party-interest. There was no persuasive evidence, at that time or now, that coalitions are more inefficient or less democratic than one-party governments. Whatever the qualities of strong majority government in homogenous societies are, these advantages are reduced in ethnically divided societies with sizeable permanent minorities. The supposed problem of over-large constituencies could have been resolved by reducing the size of the largest constituencies, like the Irish Free State did in 1934 (Mansergh 1936 cited in O’Leary and McGarry 1993). Finally, the assertion that PR (STV) confused voters is disproved by the fact that less than 2 percent of the votes cast in 1925 were invalid. The experience of elections in independent Ireland since 1922, and in Northern Ireland after 1973 has shown that familiarity with (PR) STV produce knowledge not confusion (O’Leary and McGarry 1993).

Plurality-rule and gerrymandering of constituency boundaries remained constant features of Northern Ireland local government for fifty years (O’Leary and McGarry 1993) (see section 3.5.2). The level of electoral domination all the way through Northern Ireland’s local government

system is obvious: while Unionists spoke for at most 66 percent of the population in the late 1920s they controlled 85 percent of all local authorities (Buckland 1981; Gallagher 1957 cited in O’Leary and McGarry 1993:120). Measures guaranteeing electoral domination of the Unionists were reinforced by the limitation of the local franchise – which was restricted to ratepayers and their spouses – and by the maintenance of company votes (which gave company directors up to six votes, depending upon the rateable valuation of their company). This pattern of franchise was religiously biased as well as class-based since Catholics were disproportionately poorer than Protestants. In 1928, Unionists legislated that no one could sign up to vote in a Northern Ireland parliamentary or local election if she or he were not born in Northern Ireland or an inhabitant for three years (extended to seven in 1962). “They aimed to exclude from the franchise relatively recent immigrants from the Irish Free State who continued to be eligible for the Westminster franchise after three months’ residence” (Palley 1972 cited in O’Leary and McGarry 1993:122).

No analyst disputes that the change to plurality rule for parliamentary elections in 1929 was designed to cement the hegemony of the UUP (O’Leary and McGarry 1993:122). Craig thought the ending of PR (STV) in elections to parliament worked brilliantly because his party won thirty-seven of the fifty-two seats in the 1929 election. The entire 1933 general election became a formality as twenty-seven seats were uncontested by non-Unionists. As a consequence the Unionist party won the election before a vote was cast. Northern Ireland’s demographic make-up and the governing set-up and other factors left the Unionists in permanent control of power. All this was regarded as extremely undemocratic from the Nationalists point of view. However, though the British government asked Craig not to fulfill abolition of PR (STV) in local government, it backed down when Craig and his ministers threatened to resign. This showed that Westminster conceded that Unionism was effectively in charge. Westminster was the only element with the power to intervene, but when Nationalists protested against this arrangement, they were told to raise the question at Stormont: such complaints were a matter for the Belfast parliament itself. The UUP was also able to make sure that all future Stormont elections were referenda, or “sectarian headcounts,” on the legitimacy of Northern Ireland and the border, just what Prime Minister Craig had ordered:

“What I want to get in this house and what I believe we will get very much better in this house under the old-fashioned plain and simple system, are men who are for the Union on

the one hand, or who are against it and want to go into a Dublin parliament on the other” (O’Leary and McGarry 1993:123).

### **5.2.2. Gerrymandering**

What made the abolition of PR (STV) so controversial was the subsequent redrawing of electoral boundaries (Hennessey 1997). In 1936 local Unionist party leaders worried that they might lose control of the city Derry/Londonderry, and a change was worked out. A new arrangement guaranteed that around 7,500 Unionist voters returned twelve councillors while 10,000 Nationalist voters returned only eight. Nationalists labeled this boundary manipulation again as “gerrymandering” (McKittrick and McVea 2000; Mitchell and Gillespie 1999; Stewart 1977). In public, Unionist party representatives denied gerrymandering in Derry/Londonderry and elsewhere, but in private some were more honest. One Unionist MP described the new arrangements as a “shameless and obvious gerrymander” (cited from McKittrick and McVea 2000:8). When the 1945 Labour government introduced universal suffrage for local government, the Stormont parliament passed its own Representation of the People Act (1946). The Act retained most of the old system, but limited the franchise further by removing it from lodgers who were not ratepayers. Major Curran, the UUP Chief Whip, stated that the entire measure was needed to prevent “nationalists getting control of the three border counties and Derry City.” He added: “The best way to prevent the overthrow of the government by people who had no stake in the country and had not the welfare of the people of Ulster at heart was to disenfranchise them” (Northern Whig, 11 January 1946 cited in O’Leary and McGarry 1993:120).

In 1923 a commission, under Judge John Leech, the Deputy Recorder of Belfast, was appointed to hold a series of public inquiries in areas where distribution was likely to be a controversial issue. To these inquiries ratepayers were invited to submit suggestions to arrive equitable schemes of representation largely on the basis of population. These schemes should also take into consideration the rateable valuation of property where the population could not be equalized, as was the norm in the local government franchise in Britain and in the Free State. But most Nationalists boycotted the commission; mainly because they believed that the Unionists Government’s aim was to gerrymander the new constituencies to its advantage, regardless of



Nationalists views (Hennessey 1997). Only in Irvinestown and Ballycastle did Nationalists fully co-operate and help shape the new arrangements. This non-participation of Nationalists allowed Unionists to dispute Nationalists claims of gerrymandering. Leech argued, “nationalists had an opportunity to present their case and it was their own fault if they did not present schemes” (Hennessey 1997:46). Nationalists, on the other hand, claimed they had “none of the rights and powers enjoyed by citizens of modern democratic communities” (Hennessey 1997:47). The first major grievance was the “complete abolition of Nationalists representation on the public boards” (ibid). The principal steps identified as having realized this were (a) the abolition of PR, (b) the “systematic gerrymandering of electoral areas,” and (c) the alteration of the franchise to the disadvantage of the Nationalists minority (Hennessey 1997:47).

In Omagh Rural District, Nationalists the accused Unionist Government of accepting a scheme put forward by local Unionists that reduced the electoral value of the Nationalist vote and paid tribute to the value of the Unionist vote. The electoral units were so arranged that large Nationalist majorities were lumped together and given the same representation as the smaller Unionist majorities. In this way, 5,381 Unionist electors were assured of 21 seats at the next election, compared with 18 seats for 8,459 Nationalists (Hennessey 1997). The Unionists Government and its supporters rejected Nationalists claims that the redistribution of electoral areas amounted to the “usual gerrymandering tactics,” as there had been no revision of these areas “since they were originally formed at some remote date” (Hennessey 1997: 48). The Unionists claimed that the redistribution was fair and impartial, arguing that Nationalists had a representation “far in excess of that which they were entitled” (Hennessey 1997:49). Not only Nationalists blamed the other side for gerrymandering, Unionists claimed that the Nationalists had gerrymandered the Omagh Rural District for twenty-five years. Local Unionists argued that before the redistribution there were seven electoral districts in the Fintona Dispensary District – Carryglass, Derrabrad, Draughton, Fallaghearn, Fintona, Seskinore, and Tattymoyle. Fintona, which had sent a Unionist to Omagh Council, had for many years had a population of 1,611, while Carryglass, Derrabrad, Draughton and Tattymoyle had populations of 324, 325, 534, and 565, respectively. Unionists pointed out that four Northern Ireland divisions thus returned eight representatives, while Fintona, with almost the same population as the other four, returned only

two (Hennessey 1997). Both Nationalists and Unionists interpretations of discrimination were coloured by their perceptions of the other community's motives (Hennessey 1997).

Another eye-catching example of the combined impact of the arrangement of plurality-rule, gerrymandering, and the restricted franchise occurred in the second city Derry/Londonderry in 1967. In the 1960s there were a significant Catholic majority amongst the adult population. The restricted local government franchise reduced Catholic predominance, but still left them with a considerable majority. However, the electoral division of the city into three district, South, North and Waterside wards, produced the dramatic results shown in table 1. Gerrymandering created a UUP majority of councillors by the simple expedient of concentrating the Catholic (and therefore) anti-UUP vote in one ward, and creating two smaller wards which could be guaranteed to produce UUP councillors (O'Leary and McGarry 1993).

**Table 5.1: Wards and Local Government Elections Results in Derry/Londonderry, 1967.**

Ward	Non-Unionists		Unionists	
	Votes	Councillors	Votes	Councillors
South	10,047	8	1,138	0
North	2,537	0	3,946	8
Waterside	1,852	0	3,697	4
Total	14,429	8	7,781	12
Votes/Councillors	1,804:1		732:1	

(Source: Cameron, 1969:paragraph 134, cited in O'Leary and McGarry 1993:121).

The Stormont system was characterized by unopposed elections in almost the whole period from the abolition of the PR (STV) until direct rule was introduced in 1972. This was because elections were more or less decided on a religious headcount, the side which was in the minority in a constituency often simply gave up trying to get a candidate in there. In the South Antrim district, for example, the Unionist majority was so secure that for nine consecutive elections no Nationalist went forward, a Unionist candidate being returned unopposed each time. This meant that no polling took place for Stormont elections between 1929 and 1965 (McKittrick and McVea 2000). The results were predetermined conclusions. UUP hegemony was established (O'Leary and McGarry 1993). The stability was underlined by the amazing long terms of Unionist Prime Ministers (McKittrick and McVea 2000).

### **5.3. *What Caused the Troubles?***

The problem I set out to explore in this thesis was whether the partition of Ireland in the 1920s could explain the Troubles. Northern Ireland is a difficult case for political theory. The Troubles were not caused by Northern Ireland's poor economy: Northern Ireland is a poor part of the UK, but not poor in international standards so the theoretical probability of a civil war should be very low (see section 2.2.2). Northern Ireland is not a transitional political system either. Democracy has been the type of political system since the partition in the 1920s. From the theory of regime type and armed conflict, there is little support for an outbreak of a civil war in a democracy. This relationship is well stated with the inverted U-curve between regime type and armed conflict (see section 2.3). Therefore there is little support for the view that the regime type caused the civil war in Northern Ireland.<sup>56</sup>

My conclusion is that the partition of Ireland did cause the Troubles. If the partition of Ireland had never happened it is difficult to believe that the Protestants would have had the opportunity to control the whole island, like they controlled Northern Ireland for fifty years. The separation of the island into two separate political entities allowed Unionists, who favoured to remain an integrated part of the UK, to take power in the region (Wichert 1991). The partition gave the Protestants power in Northern Ireland, which they used to discriminate against the Catholics and Nationalists. The partition gave the Unionist the power to abolish the PR (STV) system, to introduce the "first-past-the-post"-system, and the redrawing of the constituency borders (gerrymandering). On the background of this discrimination the Troubles broke out in the late 1960s.

Northern Ireland is a democracy, but it is widely accepted that during the period when Northern Ireland had its own parliament (1922-1972) there was systematic discrimination by Protestants against Catholics in three main areas: the electoral system, the allocation of public housing, and the labour market. Lawmakers and law-enforcers did discriminate against and had a suspicious attitude towards the minority community. Protestants dominated the justice system, and most of them had connections with Unionism (Wichert 1991). Protestants similarly dominated social and

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<sup>56</sup> To the extent Northern Ireland really has been a democracy, see section 5.5.

economic life. Northern Ireland is an obvious example of, even if it may not be desirable, “it is clearly possible to govern without consensus for a long time” (Lijphart 1975:96).

A consequence of the partition was that the Protestants could abolish PR (STV), introduce the plurality-rule, gerrymander, and impose further restrictions on the franchise. These electoral changes thus froze<sup>57</sup> the Catholic community out of the political life in Northern Ireland. Even though “first-past-the-post”-systems are democratic electoral systems, it is a system not working very well in Northern Ireland because the society is so sharply divided into Catholics/Nationalists and Protestants/Unionists that such a democratic system, together with gerrymandering, seemed to discriminate one part of the society. In the rest of the UK, plurality of “first-past-the-post”-systems does not pose such problems as it does in Northern Ireland. In the rest of the UK constituency borders do not discriminate against one large identity group in society, but against the smaller political parties.

Regarding relative deprivation, I do not think this is the underlying explanation of the Troubles, because without the partition of Ireland it is less likely that such strong feelings of relative deprivation would have occurred between the two groups. However, Catholics tended to be poorer than Protestants and believed this was because they were Catholics and were therefore discriminated against by Protestants. If Catholics felt that they were poorer than the Protestants because they were Catholics, then relative deprivation occurred. Catholics compare themselves with Protestants and find it nothing more than fair that they are entitled to the same material goods and rights. It is not surprising that Catholics compare what they have with what Protestants have, regarding jobs, allocation of houses, the right to vote, education and so on. If they clearly see that they always come worse out than the Protestants, then relative deprivation is likely to occur. However, I do not think this caused the Troubles.

Reynal-Querol’s (2002) article on how countries with different political systems have various probabilities of a civil war breaking out and Lijphart’s article on consociational democracy are relevant to the outbreak of the Troubles. What Reynal-Querol finds is that the proportional system turns out to have a lower probability of rebellion than the majoritarian system. The basic

idea is that the more wide-ranging the political system the higher the opportunity cost of rebellion and therefore the lower the probability of rebellion. In her empirical analysis she demonstrates how the make-up of a political system is a significant mechanism that can have an effect on the probability of civil war in a democratic system. “The more inclusive the system, the smaller the probability of civil war” (Reynal-Querol 2002:35). The most inclusive rule is unanimity. “...plurality systems are less inclusive than proportional representation systems (Reynal-Querol 2002:29). Collier and Hoeffler (2002a:6) support Reynal-Querol, saying, “Consociational democracy – proportional representation systems that produce coalition politics – reduce conflict risk relative to first-past-the-post, winner-take-all systems.” This is identical with what Lijphart (1969) argues.<sup>58</sup> In that article he argues that culturally fragmented countries can hope to achieve democratic stability if they use consociational and not competitive decision-making types. In a consociational democracy the leaders they may make “deliberate efforts to counteract the immobilizing and unstabilizing effects of cultural fragmentation (Lijphart 1969:212). A result of this can be that a country can “achieve a degree of political stability quite out of proportion to its social homogeneity” (ibid).

Is it possible that the Troubles could have been avoided, despite the partitioning of the island, if the Unionist government from the creation of Northern Ireland had taken the initiative to consociational democracy rather than “first-past-the-post”-system during the fifty years of Unionist government? Every sense that a particular section of the society is privileged over others is removed through the use of PR and the application of ratios to the allocation of public resources, thus eliminating a material source of grievance and potential conflict (Wilford 1999). Such a system would also reduce the possibility of relative deprivation.<sup>59</sup> But on the background of how Protestants viewed Catholics it is not surprising that this initiative was not taken. Later, there have been three initiatives to introduce consociational democracy in Northern Ireland: The Anglo-Irish Agreement (AIA 1985), the Brooke Initiative (1990-1992) and the Good Friday Agreement (April 1998). But by now (June 2002), none of these initiatives has been complete successful.

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<sup>57</sup> The discussion to what extent the Catholics choose to be frozen out of the society when they refused to participate with the Leech-commission could be an interesting one.

<sup>58</sup> For consociational democracy, see section 2.2.1.1.

<sup>59</sup> See section 5.6.

#### **5.4. *Why did the Troubles break out in the late 1960s?***

From my point of view, the Troubles broke out in the late 1960s because, despite discrimination and secondary-citizen status, Catholics in the 1950s were aware that their economic circumstances were better than they had been in the inter-war years. Out of this relative economic prosperity grew a relaxation of social and political tension, which was accepted and encouraged (Wichert 1991:82). At that time in the 1960s a strong Catholic middle-class had grown up. This middle-class fought for bringing the Catholic minority back into the society. When the Protestant establishment frustrated this, violence ensued.

Changes in the economic structure of the province and the introduction of the welfare state did affect the social structure of the Catholic section of the population. Before the Second World War Catholics had been under-represented in the urban and rural middle and upper classes. The improvement and extension of secondary and higher education, as well as the increased demand of the new industries for better trained and professionally educated managers, after 1945 encouraged the Catholic middle class to expand and diversify. It is said about the Education Act of 1947 "...in time, there emerged in the Catholic community highly articulate and politically sophisticated leaders who were determined to end what they considered to second-class status of the minority" (Fitzsimmons 1993:62, note 55). Darby (1995:18) says

"A number of Westminster-led social changes after the Second World War, including the introduction of free secondary education for all, led during the 1950s to the emergence of a Catholic middle class. It was their growing dissatisfaction that led to the civil rights campaign of the 1960s."

The proportion of Catholics in professional and managerial occupations thus began to rise. The changing, diversifying economy enabled the Catholic middle class to grow and removed the worst excesses of poverty from the working classes, who did not otherwise benefit in this period; and social legislation gave equal education opportunities to Catholic children. Catholics began to participate more actively in politics after 1945. They contested the June election of that year and returned ten Nationalist members and one Socialist Republican. They took their seats at both

Stormont and Westminster, where the return of a Labour majority promised better things to come. This was backed up by extra-parliamentary organizations: an Anti-Partition League, predominantly of middle-class members, organized rallies and focused its activities and propaganda on the removal of the border (Wichert 1991). But this hopeful outlook did not last. The Election and Franchise Act (NI), 1946, maintained the pre-war system and did not democratize it further as Britain would in 1948. The Queen's University constituency was maintained, allowing plural voting and preventing the redrawing of electoral boundaries. Gerrymandering could thus be maintained and "the delicate balance of Unionist control would not be disturbed" (Wichert 1991:52). Most legislation following this Act was disputed and troublesome.

However, the 1950s, says Wichert (1991:80) saw the beginning of economic and social, if not yet political integration of the Catholic middle classes, though the Catholic working classes declined in the social order even though they benefited economically through state aid. While the Catholic middle class grew in numbers and confidence, the Catholic working class was adversely affected by the economic changes. The Catholic working class was forced down the social scale within the working classes through contracting agricultural employment and the growth of non-manual but low-grade occupations. An increased number of Catholics became unskilled workers, while Protestant workers succeeded in replacing skilled manual work with semi-skilled and lower-grade non-manual work, thus shifting the socio-economic balance at the bottom further in their favour. Both the Unionists and the Catholic middle class had gained in confidence. The relative economic and social prosperity of the Northern Ireland and their long-term consequences were not apparent until the later 1960s (Wichert 1991:54). The growth of Catholic prosperity through educational and general economic improvements<sup>60</sup> seems to have made urban Protestants, and in particular the middle classes, more tolerant and liberal towards Catholics (Wichert 1991:73). Towards the end of the 1950s there were clear indications that some small but growing sections of the Protestant population were willing to adopt a more liberal attitude towards the minority population and possibly even offer them access to politics (Wichert 1991:75). Continued

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<sup>60</sup> Although expanded educational opportunities have been presented as playing the main role in the growth of the Catholic middle class, the educational system in which these opportunities were made available continues to be starkly divided not only by religion but also by class. Northern Ireland ... retain to a selective system of post-primary education, with pupils being allocated to grammar or secondary schools on the basis of an examination taken at the age of eleven. Clear class divisions characterize post-primary education (Breen and Devine 1999:56-57).

segregation in education maintained the “Irish” cultural identity of the Catholic community with its political overtones of Nationalism. Only at the university level did this separation end, and it was here that an increasing number of young Catholics arrived who would make up the future new middle classes. These young Catholics also acquired a more tolerant social and political outlook. By the end of the 1950s about 22 % of student enrolled were Catholics. They were not yet representative of their part of the population, but their numbers had greatly increased since the inter-war period (Wichert 1991:81). The social structure of the province was not a clear reflection of its economic base; for historical as much as economic reasons all Protestants assumed a superior status over their Catholic counterparts on the economic and social ladder. Catholics appear to have accepted this as “one of the unpleasant facts of life,” (Wichert 1991:82) another indication of Catholic acceptance of the general political framework in which they lived, perhaps the first step towards wanting to improve some of these “unpleasant facts.”

During the O'Neill era, a much-strengthened Catholic middle class was created by the mid-sixties through openings made for Catholics in the nineteen fifties. This new middle class looked away from the long-established role of serving his or her own community and went for the most part into teaching and the medical and legal professions, given that Protestants dominated the public service. The new Catholic middle class looked, as they would like to liberalize and modernize traditional nationalist politics in order to partake in the economic, social life, and political life of Northern Ireland. For these groups the Republican movement and the IRA did not offer anything (Hennessey 1997), and “their [the Catholic middle-class] growing economic and social confidence was transformed into the desire for full and equal rights or citizenship” (Wichert 1991:100). Professional middle class people were encouraged by the rhetoric and promises of O'Neill's policies to improve matters politically for their community, and from Catholics who were impatient with the traditional Nationalists politics and frustrated by the O'Neill reforms slow implementation grew the pressure groups and extra-parliamentary opposition of the mid sixties (Wichert 1991). The first of these pressure groups was the Campaign for Social Justice, which tried to collect and make public evidence of discrimination, particularly in housing and the gerrymandering of elections (Hennessey 1997). The 1960s were characterized by civil right marches, confrontations between Nationalists and Unionist and in the end the era named the Troubles emerged (see section 4.4).



### **5.5. *Northern Ireland as a Pseudo-Democracy***

Lijphart (1975) has named Northern Ireland a pseudo-democracy. He says that the question that should be raised is to what extent Northern Ireland has in reality been democratic, because an essential element in the Northern Ireland problem has been the alleged systematic discrimination against Catholics citizens with regard to the right to vote and other democratic rights. The most important grievance has been the overrepresentation the Unionists got when PR (STV) was abolished, the restricted franchise, plural voting, and gerrymandering.

Budge and O'Leary (1973) found out, says Lijphart (1975), that the Unionists almost all the time got a much higher percentage of seats than of votes, but this pattern is not unusual under a plurality systems of elections, and "plurality systems are used in many democracies of good standing" (Lijphart 1975:93). At the local level in Belfast, Budge and O'Leary (1973 in Lijphart 1975) found that the Unionists almost constantly received a much higher percentage of seats than of votes, but they point out that this benefit was for the most part the effect of the fact that most wards with solid Unionists or Nationalists majorities were not contested after the abolition of PR (STV). So in these circumstances, Budge and O'Leary conclude, the comparison of percentages of votes and seats is of doubtful value.

The effects of the restricted franchise and plural voting – both based on criteria of property – that were features of the local elections until in recent times are more hard to evaluate (Lijphart 1975). (Budge and O'Leary 1973 in Lijphart 1975:94) compare Belfast with Glasgow and four other British cities of similar size with regard to the percentages of adults excluded from the local franchise. They conclude, "For almost the first half of the twentieth century a limited local franchise was neither unique to Belfast nor peculiarly restrictive there." But Belfast became a deviant case after the Second World War by going on to disfranchise between one-third and one-fifth of the adult citizens. Budge and O'Leary's 1966 survey showed that disfranchisement favoured Unionists, but "the bias is so unsystematic as not to be the result of an concerted plan (ibid).

The best example of the Northern Ireland gerrymandering was the city of Derry/Londonderry. Derry/Londonderry had Catholic and Nationalist majority among voters and the total population but there was a clear Unionist majority on the Council. But the constituencies for the Stormont elections appear not to have been manipulated in this way. The data from Budge and O'Leary (1973) show that did these practices did not play a significant role in the city elections in Belfast between 1897 and 1967 either (in Lijphart 1975). To the extent that the ward were disproportionate in population, adult citizens or voters, – and thus were “malapportioned” – and to the degree that they were won with majorities of different sizes – and thus potentially “gerrymandered” – these inequalities usually were to the drawback of the Unionists. Unionist political control in Belfast rested on “genuine majority support rather than electoral sharp practice” (Budge and O'Leary 1973 in Lijphart 1975:94). Lijphart says Richard Rose (1968 in Lijphart 1975:94) extends this conclusion: “The real difficulty has not been the various electoral irregularities but the undeniable majority supporting the Unionist Party.”

Majority rule is not synonymous with democracy. In Northern Ireland, Protestants minorities ruled a number of cities with Catholics majorities for a number of decades. Majority rule in Northern Ireland does not have the necessary consequence of minority rights and alternation in office. This is why some writers (see Lijphart 1975) refer to Northern Ireland as a “Protestant supremacy” rather than a democracy. Northern Ireland has been a majority dictatorship rather than a genuine democracy says Lijphart (1975). It is also important he says that whenever the principle of majority rule is applied, one should raise the question: “Majority of what?”

Seen from an Irish Nationalist perspective there was no doubt that Northern Ireland was an “Orange State.” There was no mystery about the nature and the functioning of Northern Ireland. The Order was institutionally linked to the Unionist party (McKittrick and McVea 2000), and there was an organic link, from Northern Ireland's development of a province-wide institutional form in 1905, between Ulster Unionism and the Orange Order. Catholics complained of Protestant clerical intervention in politics, particularly with reference to the Orange Order. For Catholics the Orange Order parade was a demonstration of control of territory, a demonstration of Protestant power, and a proof that nothing had changed in almost three hundred years since the Battle of Boyne in 1690 (Hennessey 1997). Politically the Order turned into a central part of

Northern Ireland. From 1921 to 1969 only three of fifty-four Unionists cabinet ministers were not members of the Order (Cochrane 1999). Craig set the tone when he told the Belfast parliament: "...we are a Protestant parliament and a Protestant state" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:13). Orange marches became part of the structure of Unionist government while at the same time Nationalist parades were subject to severe restriction (McKittrick and McVea 2000). Maintenance of a privileged position for Protestants meant continued discontent among Northern Ireland's Catholics. When Northern Irish Catholic-Nationalists began to take to the streets, to protest rather than to riot, they met direct opposition from the local police and then legislative opposition. The Public Order Act, passed in 1951, required that 48 hours' notice be given before any parade could legally be held (except "traditional" ones, such as those on the Twelfth of July); it also vested in the government and in the police unchallengeable authority to ban or re-route parades. In 1953, Stormont ratified the Electoral Law Amendment Act that, among other things, mandated that all parliamentary candidates commit themselves to take the oath of office if elected. The consequence of this Act was that parties that rejected to recognize Northern Ireland, like Sinn Féin, could no longer use the ballot box to demonstrate the strength of their party without having their members to swear false (Fitzsimmons 1993). Two senior Methodists have described the power of the Order during the years 1921-1969:

"Membership was an indispensable condition of political advancement. It protected the employment of Protestants by its influence over employers, which is a polite way of saying that it contrived systematic discrimination against Catholics. Local authorities were dominated by members of the local lodges" (McKittrick and McVea 2000:14).

McKittrick and McVea (2000) assert that there had always been a large amount of segregation between Catholics and Protestants in Belfast, and the Stormont system helped make sure that such pattern would go on. Although there were major economic changes over the decades, the basic elements of Unionist dominance, Catholic powerlessness and Westminster disregard were relatively unaffected even by an event as cataclysmic as World War Two. The record of the Unionist government, chiefly in its early decades, contains many instances of senior government ministers not only overlooking discriminating practices but also approving of them.

## **5.6. Could Consociational Democracy Have “Saved” Northern Ireland from the Troubles?**

Lijphart (1975) does not think it is very possible that consociational democracy could have worked in Northern Ireland because there were (during the years 1922-1972) three factors favourable to consociational democracy lacking in Northern Ireland. The first one is a multiple balance of power. Northern Ireland has been characterized by a disproportion of power: a permanent majority-minority relationship. The leaders of rival subcultures will tend to be more willing to share power with others if they are not capable to achieve exclusive power. The condition most favourable to consociational democracy is one in which there are three or more separate subcultures that are all minorities. Northern Ireland, with its two-folded division into political subcultures with no equilibrium and with one subculture able to use hegemonic power<sup>61</sup> is the worst situation (Lijphart 1975). The second factor is acceptability of the grand coalition form of government as normative model. Again Northern Ireland is the worst possible position because the Protestant majority is close to the UK, and the UK provides them with the normative standards of governmental organization. Either power sharing or proportional representation is very British. The third factor is that there has to be some level of national solidarity. In a plural society it is supportive if it is an overarching consensus between the sub cultural cleavages. Such solidarity linking Protestants and Catholics seem to be absent in Northern Ireland. Here national solidarities intensify the cleavages because the Catholics feel loyalty to the Republic whereas the Protestants are faithful to the British Crown (Lijphart 1975).

Three other factors contributing to consociational democracy do appear to be present in Northern Ireland, but when these factors are analysed in the context of the Northern Ireland situation it becomes clear how they are interpreted needs to be modified. These factors are a small population, distinct lines of cleavages, and external threats to the country. Northern Ireland is in a favourable situation because the population is only 1.5 million and because it does not carry out its own foreign policy. This is important because consociational government makes heavy burdens of the politicians. As a consequence it is helpful if the usual burdens of government are

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<sup>61</sup> Hegemonic power in Northern Ireland, see O’Leary and McGarry (1993:ch3).

not too heavy. Small countries have an advantage as their domestic problems are probably more manageable and because they are less likely to pursue an active foreign policy. Consociational democracy does call for a remarkable and sensitive leadership and the small size of the population means that the reservoir of political talent is very small. Northern Ireland is well below the minimum of how small a country can be to be conducive to consociational democracy says Lijphart (1975).

According to the second factor, rival subcultures may coexist peacefully if there is little contact between them and consequently few occasions for conflict. The Protestant-Catholic cleavage in Northern Ireland is extremely sharp, and this does appear to have the function of the good fences that make good neighbours. Rosemary Harris reports that in Ballybeg there were few contacts across the religious divide and that when a meeting did occur “the greatest efforts were made to prevent any controversial topic from being discussed” (Harris 1972 in Lijphart 1975:101). She suggests that it was because of the deep religious cleavage that such cross-religious individual contacts were “particular” “neighbourly” (ibid). But it should be pointed out says Lijphart, that such distinct cleavages are a favourable factor in the preservation of consociational democracy, not automatically in set up of such a democracy. But in the distinct-cleavage proposition there is an assumption in which the Northern Ireland case turns out to be incorrect. That is that such distinct lines of cleavage encourage the internal political consistency inside each subculture and as a result the freedom that the leaders have to make agreement with the leaders of rival subcultures. Such flexibility is very important in consociational politics, because the elites have to be capable to cooperate and compromise with each other without losing the support of their supporters. Even though it is reasonable to believe there is a connection between distinct cleavages, sub cultural cohesion and flexibility for elites, the case of Northern Ireland supplies a corrective. Although the religious cleavage does result in a ““general intensification of social life’ within the subcultures” (ibid), there is much factionalism, especially among the Unionists, and an extreme fragmentation of parties (Lijphart 1975).

The “external threats to the country” proposition is based on the idea that foreign threats may create a drive toward consociationalism. The idea is that such threats may impress on quarrelling elites the need for unity and collaboration. But the Northern Ireland regime has been under non-

stop external threat, although not a very serious one, of the Republic's constitutional claim to the province. However, this has not created cooperative attitudes, so the adjustment that the proposition needs is that an external threat must be perceived as a common danger by all of the subcultures in order to have a joining effect. As in the case of Northern Ireland, it has broadened the differences between subcultures (Lijphart 1975).

The answer to the question in the headline of this subsection must be "no" according to Lijphart's article from 1975. In sum, Lijphart's argument indicates that this preferred model of consociational democracy could not have prevented the outbreak of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

### ***5.7. Did the partition cause the Troubles?***

Breen and Devine (1999:52) say, "The sectarian divide has lain at the root of the conflict that was renewed in the late 1960s." O'Leary and McGarry (1993:55) trace the cause of the Troubles further back, saying:

"There is one indisputable historic cause of the current conflict. Without the colonial plantation of Ulster in the seventeenth century, and its legacy, Northern Ireland would not exist. The roots of the present antagonisms lie in the conquest of Ireland by the Tudor monarchs of England in the sixteenth century, and the subsequent consolidation of English rule through the colonization of Ulster by Scots and English settlers. Since the Irish refused to become loyalist Protestants the Tudors decided that loyalist Protestants should be brought to Ireland."

The literature on Irish history, politics and social life point towards, if one is to seek only one explanation, the conclusion that the partition of Ireland did cause the Troubles in Northern Ireland that began in the late 1960s. The Unionists could not have got so much political power alone in the whole of Ireland as they got in Northern Ireland, so there would not have been Protestant privilege and discrimination against Catholics, which are the problems that lay behind the outbreak of the Troubles. That is to say, the period of violent conflict 1969-1994, known as the Troubles, is a direct consequence of the partition of Ireland and the politics practised in

Northern Ireland by the Protestants and Unionists. On the other hand, one may wonder that if Ireland had not been partitioned there would have been trouble of another kind, with different roots, and with the leading actors in different roles relative to each other, maybe at a similar level of violence, and perhaps even at an earlier date. That, however, would be only speculation.

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